

asheville



downtown **master plan**

Downtown Master Plan Appendices

March 27, 2009

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KIMLEY-HORN & ASSOCIATES • HERITAGE DIRECTIONS • CODE STUDIO

appendix

Experiencing Downtown

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Enhance the Downtown Asheville experience by cultivating its creative, cultural, and historic character.

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- *Figure 1*— Downtown Places for Arts and Entertainment diagram
- *Figure 2*— Designated Historic Properties diagram
- *Figure 3*— Targeting Preservation and Change diagram
- *Figure 4*— Air-Right Development diagram

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS SUPPLEMENTING CORE STRATEGY ELEMENTS

(Number references correspond to superscript numbers in main strategy text.)

¹ ARC program opportunities include: accommodating live/work space, a retail outlet, working studios open to the public, a hostel for visiting artists, shared equipment for artists-in-residence, a small performance space, a library and archive, offices for shared professional services (such as legal, accounting, photography, and printing), a restaurant, a store that sells recycled material by the pound, sculpture gardens, an “art lending library,” etc. In the long term, locate and establish a permanent Downtown home for the Artist Resource Center if its startup space becomes insufficient.

² Near-term upgrades, however, should include a more efficient, zoned HVAC system.

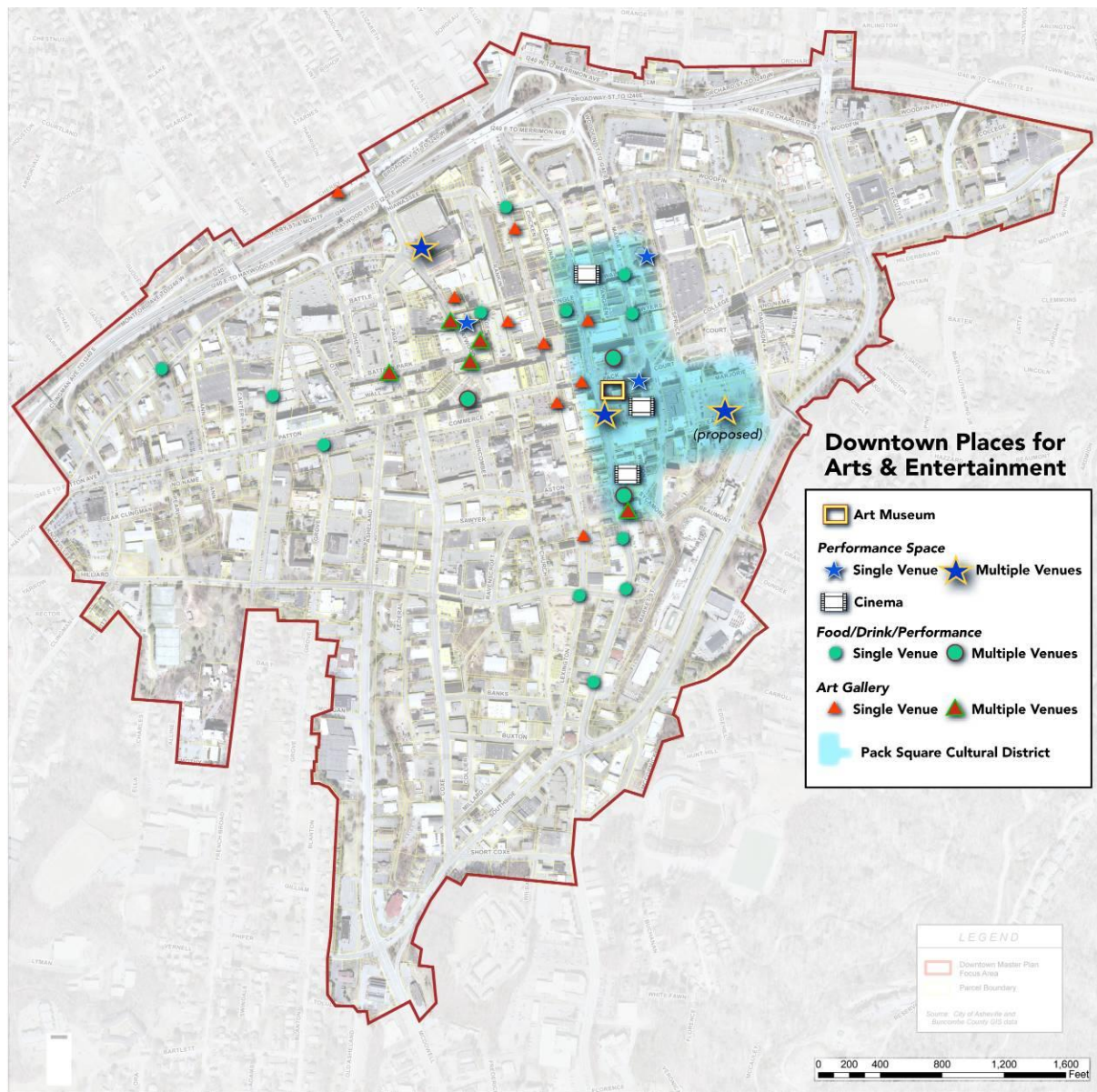


Figure 1 The great concentration, variety, and quality of arts-related destinations downtown – be they venerable institutions, small businesses or impromptu music and art in public space – are central to its vitality, economy and identity, now and in the future.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION

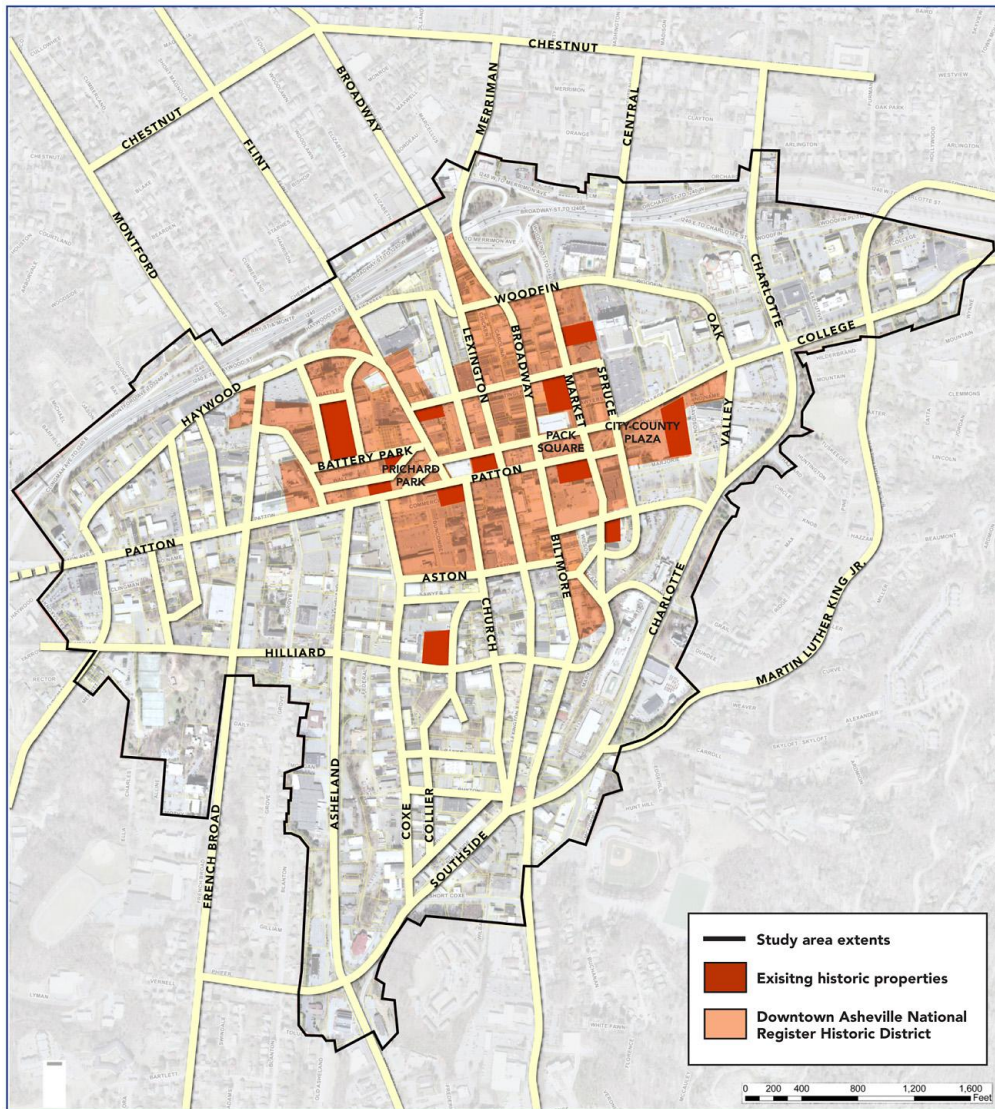


Figure 2 Currently recognized historic district and properties

TARGETING PRESERVATION AND CHANGE

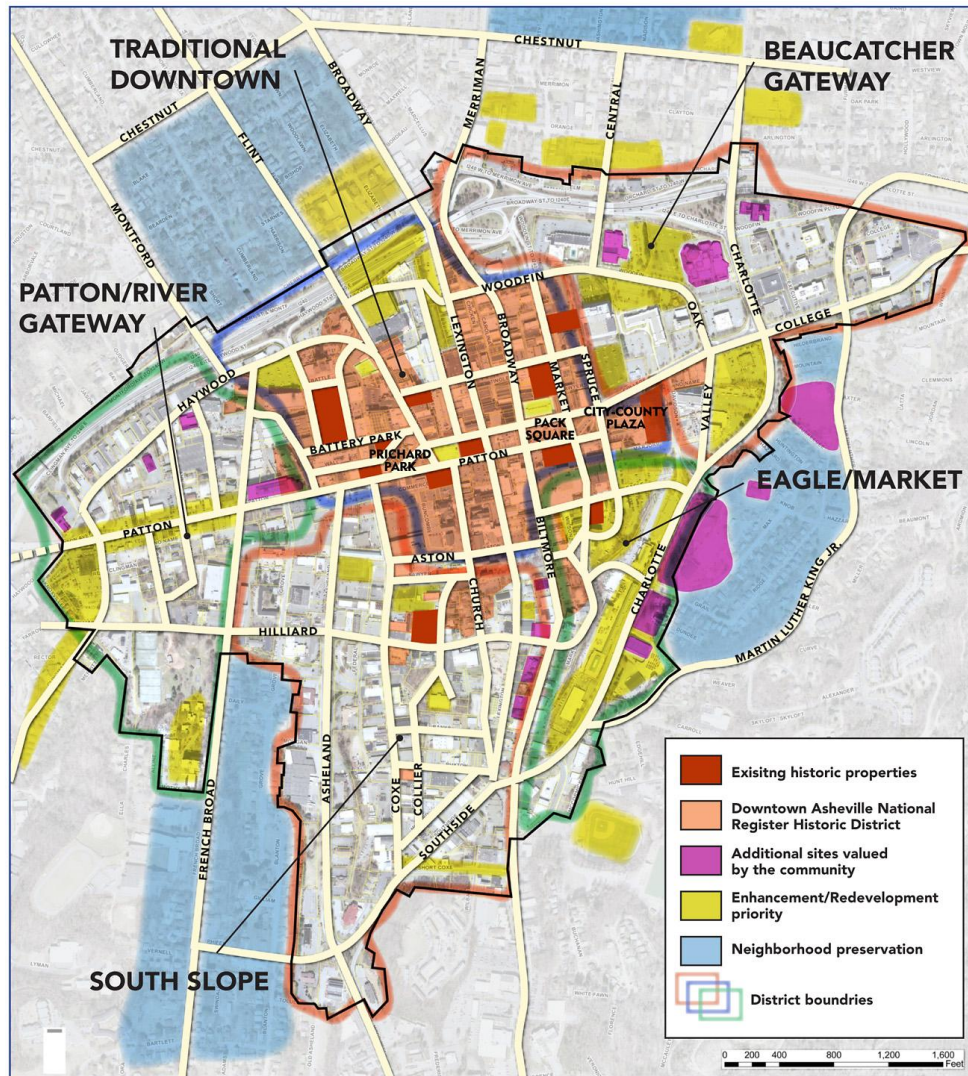


Figure 3 Currently recognized historic district and properties, plus community-designated priorities for preservation and change

appendix

Experiencing Downtown

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Expand convenient choices for
Downtown access and mobility.

CONTENTS

- Detailed recommendations supplementing core strategy elements (Number references correspond to superscript numbers in main strategy text.)
- *Figure 1*-- Parking Ownership diagram
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- *Figure 4*-- Potential Shuttle Route diagram

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS SUPPLEMENTING CORE STRATEGY ELEMENTS

(Number references correspond to superscript numbers in main strategy text.)

³ Shuttle service should operate at five- to ten-minute headways during peak hours and at ten- to-fifteen-minute off-peak headways.

⁴ Add bike lanes to these Downtown streets: Asheland Avenue, Coxe Avenue, Hilliard Avenue, South Charlotte Street/Valley Street, and Southside Avenue.

⁵ Add shared lane markings to these streets in or adjacent to Downtown: Charlotte Street (north of I-240), Chestnut Street, Montford Avenue, and South French Broad Avenue.

⁶ Install sturdy bike racks throughout Downtown for a minimum of two racks per street block.

⁷ Improve wayfinding to parking by:

- Integrating parking facilities into the TDA's wayfinding system, including directions from parking decks to restaurants, workplaces, medical facilities, galleries, historic and cultural facilities, and other key Downtown points; and,

- Electronically guiding drivers to the most appropriate parking areas through signage (coordinated with the wayfinding system). Show real-time parking capacities on line.

⁸ Investigate possibilities for new parking at: a) the AT&T site, b) land between Rankin and North Lexington, c) joint ventures for additional parking in planned developments between Page and Haywood, and d) joint ventures with the Basilica.

⁹ Extend on-street parking fee hours until 8:00 pm.

¹⁰ In July 2009, increase the daily maximum charged in parking garages by \$1 per day (this maximum was increased in July 2008 from \$4 and \$6 to \$5 and \$7).

¹¹ If on-street demand stays near 100-percent and evening demand increases in garages, consider decreasing the night and weekend rates for garage parking to free up on-street spaces.

¹² Add bike lanes to the following streets: Biltmore Avenue (US 25), College Street, Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, McDowell Street, and Patton Avenue.

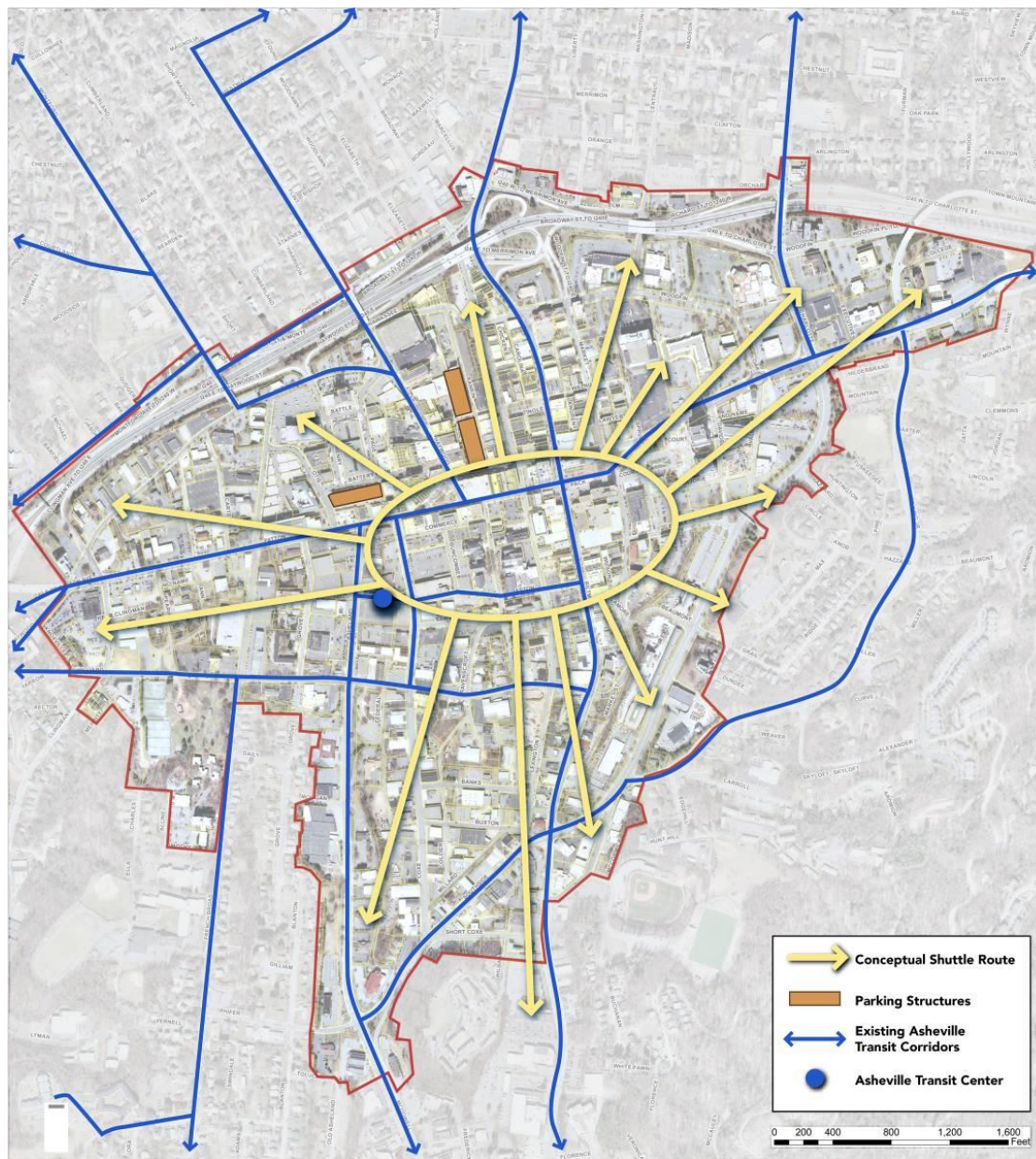
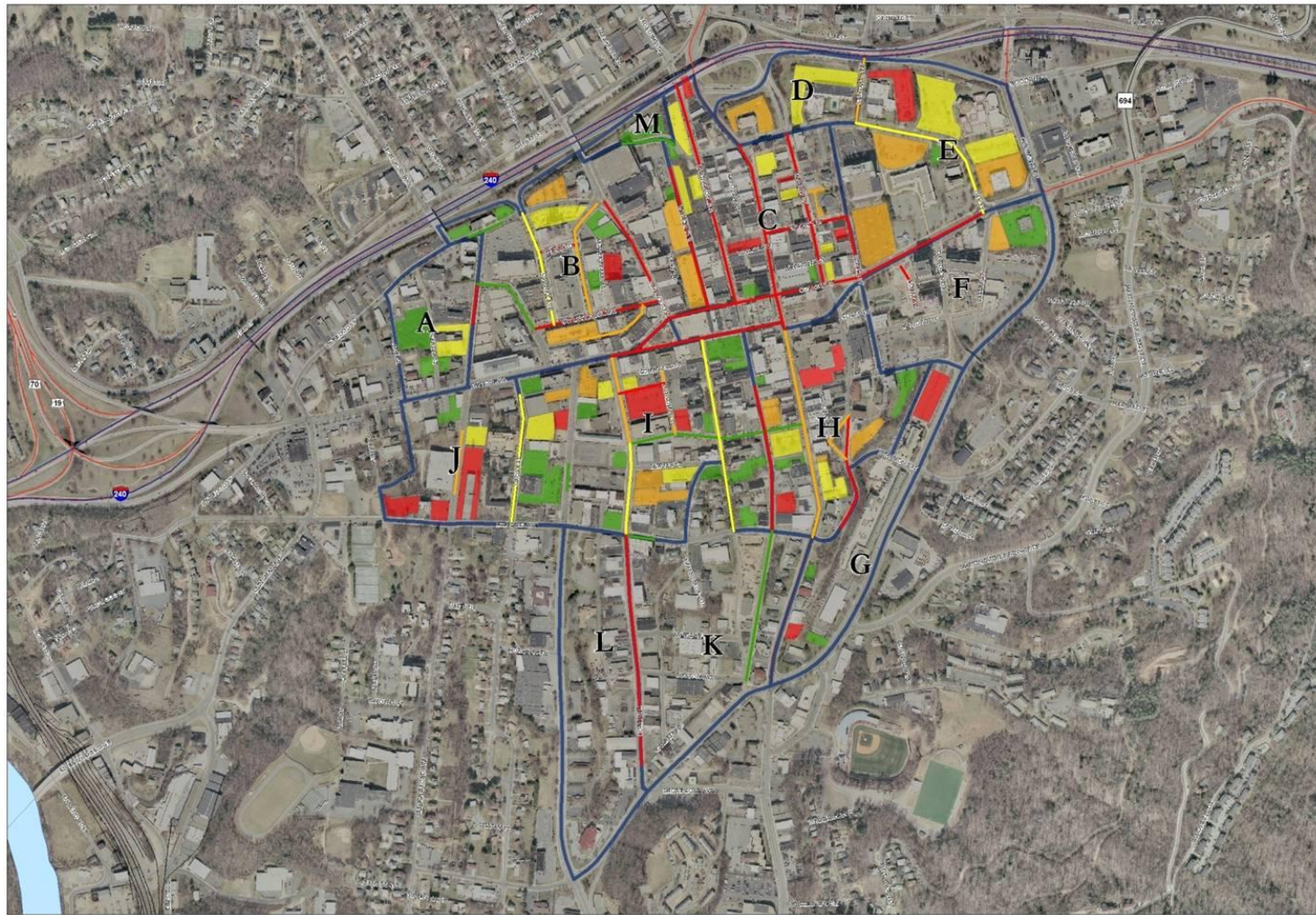


Figure 1 A downtown shuttle— as conceptually shown in the diagram to the left— should serve both as a circulator and as a shuttle for downtown employees. Ideally, the shuttle route should connect existing transit amenities such as the Asheville Transit Center, with parking garages, large employment centers, and other possible points of activity throughout the downtown. The City intends to undertake a separate study of the shuttle system in order to recommend routes, estimate ridership and estimate capital and operating costs for such a system.



City of Asheville Comprehensive Parking Study
Weekday PM (Noon - 7pm) Occupancy

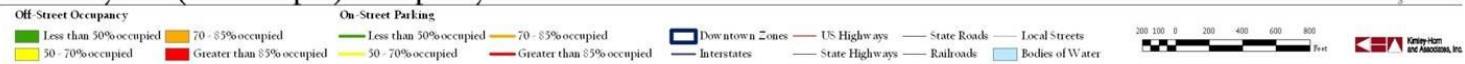


Figure 2

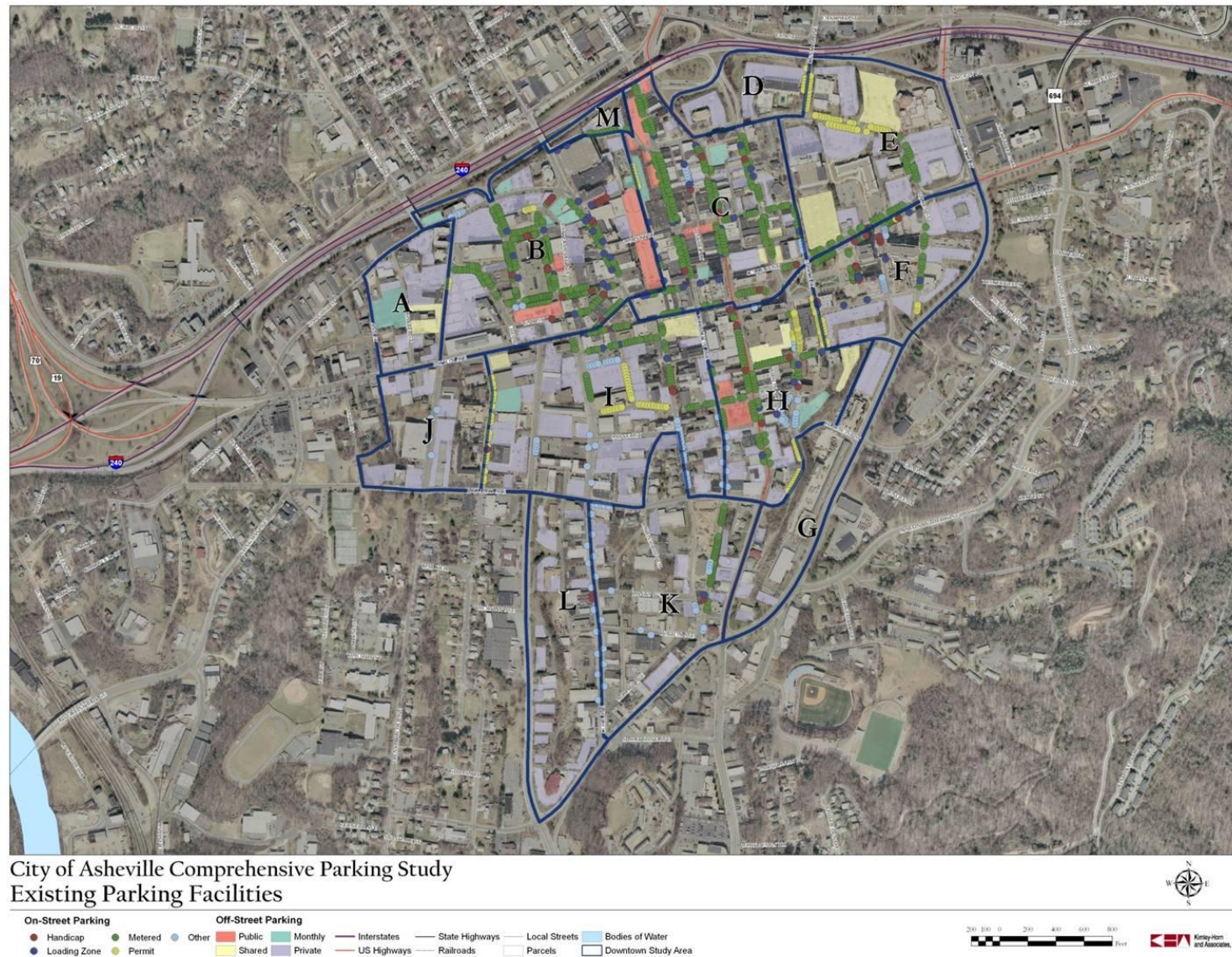
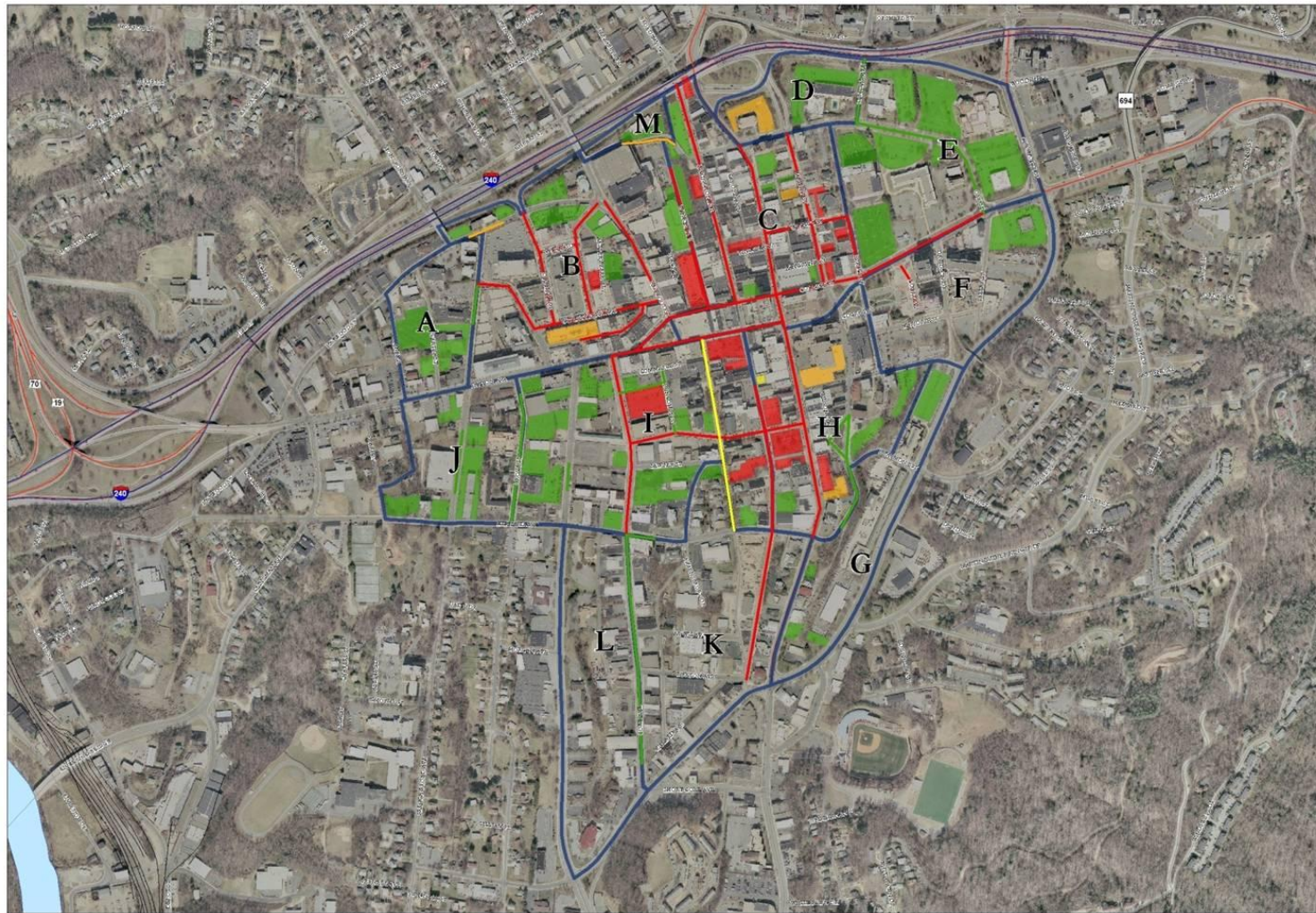


Figure 3

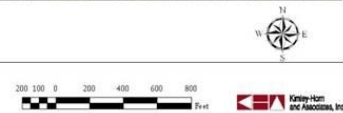


City of Asheville Comprehensive Parking Study
Weekend PM (5pm - 11pm) Occupancy

Off-Street Occupancy
 Green: Less than 50% occupied
 Yellow: 50 - 70% occupied
 Orange: 70 - 85% occupied
 Red: Greater than 85% occupied

On-Street Parking
 Green: Less than 50% occupied
 Yellow: 50 - 70% occupied
 Orange: 70 - 85% occupied
 Red: Greater than 85% occupied

Legend:
 Blue outline: Downtown Zones
 Blue line: Interstates
 Red line: US Highways
 Grey line: State Highways
 Grey line: State Roads
 Grey line: Local Streets
 Grey line: Railroads
 Blue area: Bodies of Water



K&H
Kendall-Ham
and Associates, Inc.

Figure 4

appendix

Shaping Downtown

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Inaugurate an urban design framework to extend Downtown's sense of place and community.

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DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS SUPPLEMENTING CORE STRATEGY ELEMENTS

(Number references correspond to superscript numbers in main strategy text.)

¹³ Define RFQ and RFP criteria on public land to support urban design framework goals. Seize these near-term opportunities to foster positive change.

- Redevelop City-owned land along South Charlotte/Valley (including the DPW service areas). Conduct a community-based planning process emphasizing involvement of the African-American community to determine priority uses, scale and other characteristics. Encourage participation by the two community Development corporations in the Eagle/Market district.
- Encourage joint-ventures for park or plaza space in the redevelopment of City-owned land at Haywood and Page Streets

Include civic or retail uses on the ground level of all City-owned RFP sites.

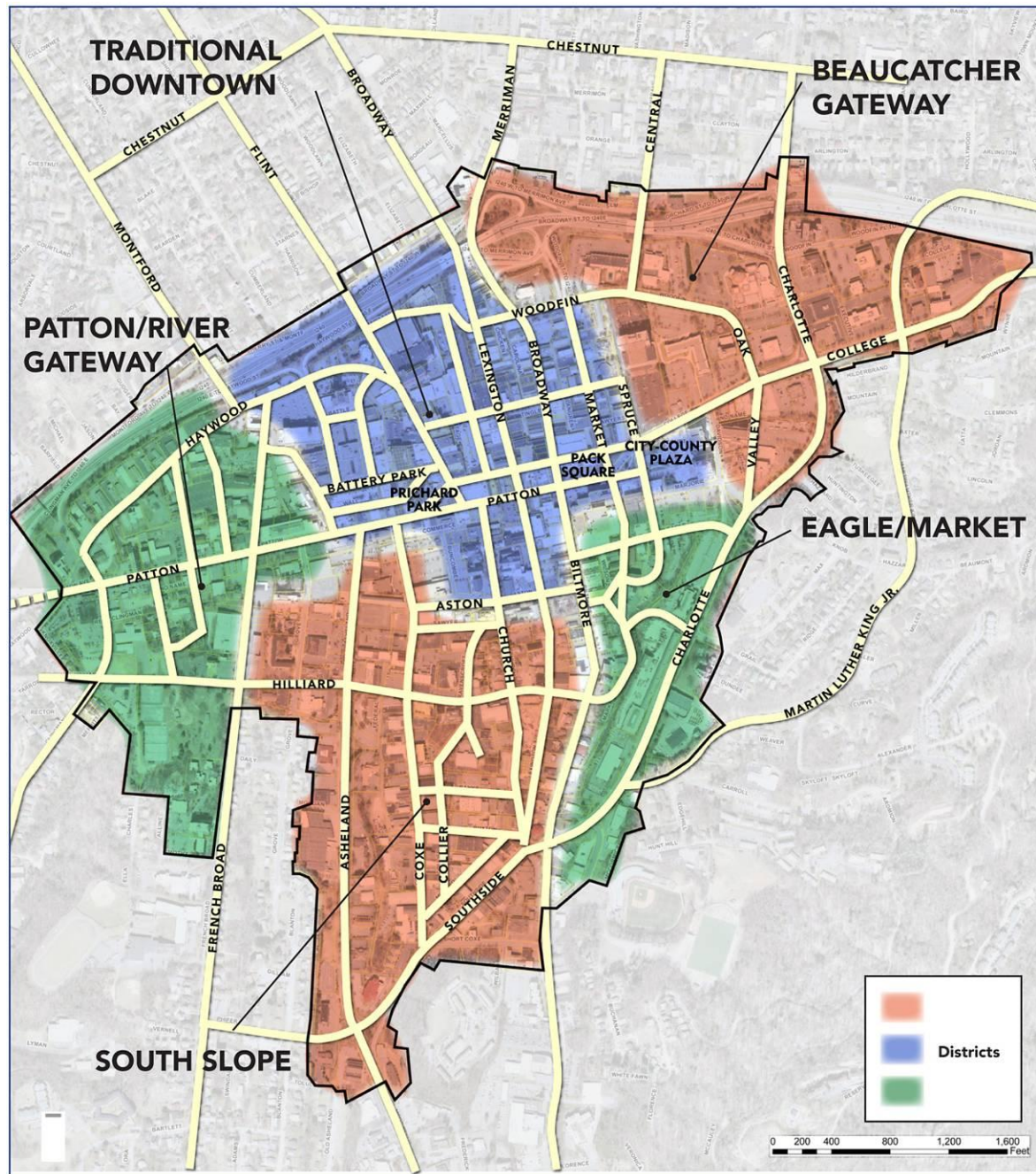


Figure 1 Downtown Districts diagram

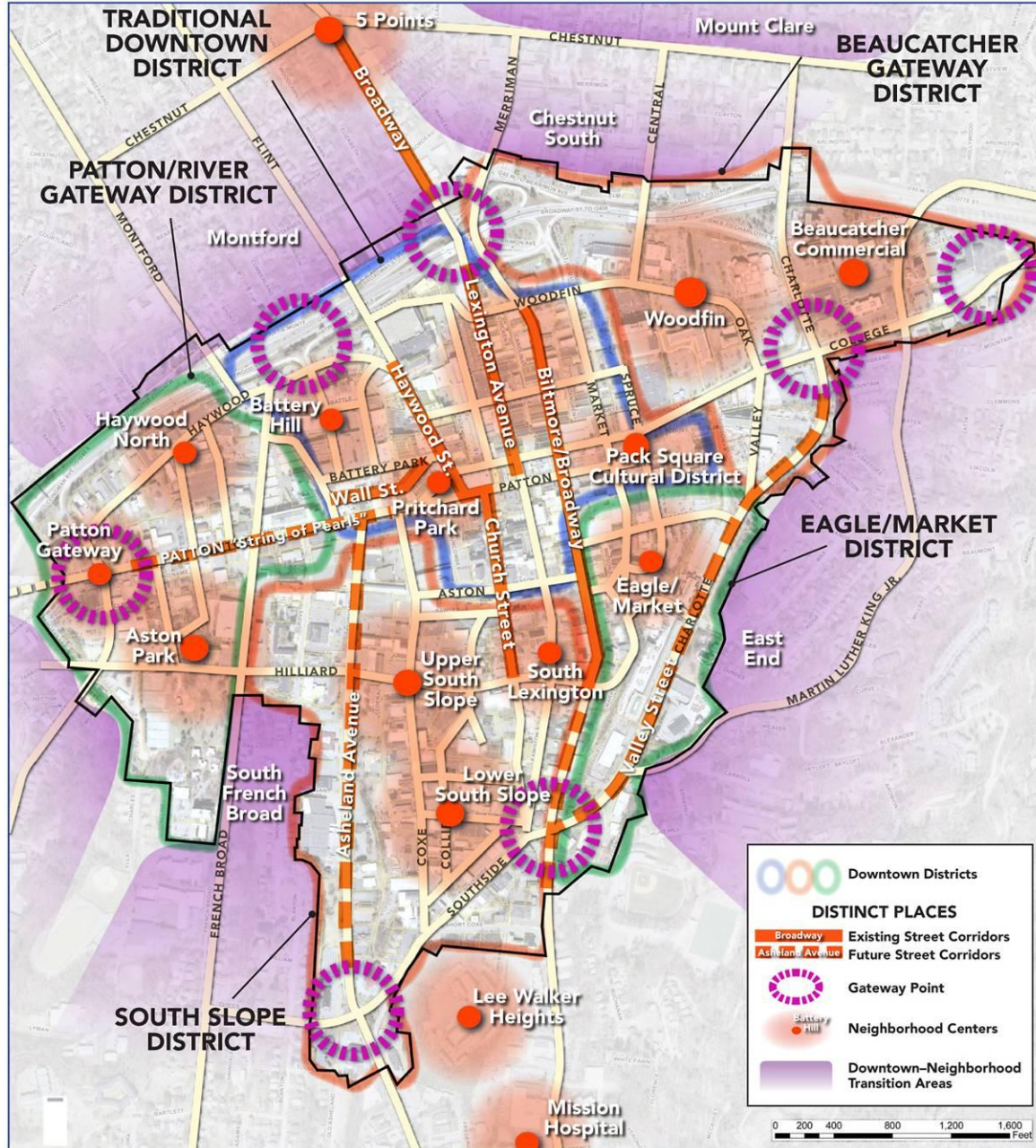


Figure 2 Downtown Places diagram

Traditional Downtown District

The traditional downtown exemplifies what most people *think* of as downtown. It largely coincides with the extents of the National Register Historic District and of the area most amenable to walking. The significant historic architecture, eclectic mix of uses, and generally pedestrian-friendly quality of the Traditional Downtown are fundamental to its *appeal, and thus must be maintained. As long as they respect this*, thoughtfully designed new buildings are highly appropriate in this district on vacant sites, replacing non-historic structures, or surmounting historic structures. Such opportunity for continued investment in existing and new buildings and businesses is necessary for the Traditional Downtown District to continue to thrive.

○ **Land use:**

- All downtown uses are appropriate
- Combining compatible uses in single buildings is encouraged
- Priority area for uses creating jobs, whether emerging HUB-related enterprises or independent small business enterprises
- Housing is also appropriate, reinforcing its existing presence.

○ **Building height and density:**

- Substantial height and density are a traditional hallmark of downtown streets and should continue to be encouraged to support property value, intensity of activity and urban design character.

- The intermediate 145' height threshold applies to much of the district to reinforce the prevailing scale of tall traditional buildings like the Jackson Building, and to reduce shadow impacts on narrow streets.
- The taller 265' height threshold applies to Battery Hill and previously redeveloped area between Woodfin, College, and Spruce, to bring additional value and activity to these areas and augment the skyline at high points in downtown.
- **Gateways and connections:** The district has significant gateways and connections in need of improvement along its northern edge.
 - Where Montford and Flint Streets cross I-240, emphasize pedestrian improvements and new gateway landmarks through use of buildings, landscape and/or public art. While a proposed park deck over I-240 here would be desirable, its cost may be prohibitive in the foreseeable future. As an alternative consider a modest widening of one or both bridges to accommodate landscape buffers from the highway below (see photo).
 - Where Haywood Street intersects O'Henry Street and the ramp exit from I-240, enhance sense of entrance with improved landscape, wayfinding signage and infill development. Any development on the AT&T parking lot, including a proposed public parking structure, should include an occupied building edge facing Haywood and O'Henry. Strongly encourage screening of surface parking on the Basilica of St. Lawrence and Battery Park Apartments sites, preferably by replacing it below or behind new buildings, otherwise by landscape plantings.

- Where Broadway, North Lexington and Merrimon pass beneath I-240, a new mural adds important elements of identity, color and scale to the underpass. Planned way-finding signage will further mark this gateway. Building on this progress, pedestrian improvements (especially to highway ramp crosswalks) and infill development on vacant or underdeveloped parcels in the area should be encouraged to further reduce dominance of the highway.

○ **Additional opportunities and priorities:**

- The blocks between Rankin and North Lexington Streets north of Walnut have been considered for redevelopment with public parking and new housing. This or other redevelopment concepts here should be encouraged so long as North Lexington is continuously faced with occupied buildings containing housing and/or other active uses.
- College Street blocks between Haywood and Market Streets suffer from a series of buildings with blank facades that detract from this important east-west pedestrian corridor. Several redevelopment or rehabilitation efforts should be encouraged to make this an inviting walking street:
 - 1) Redeveloping the BB&T parking structure with a significant residential building of sufficient value to pay for new below-grade parking serving BB&T and the residential building at different peak hours;

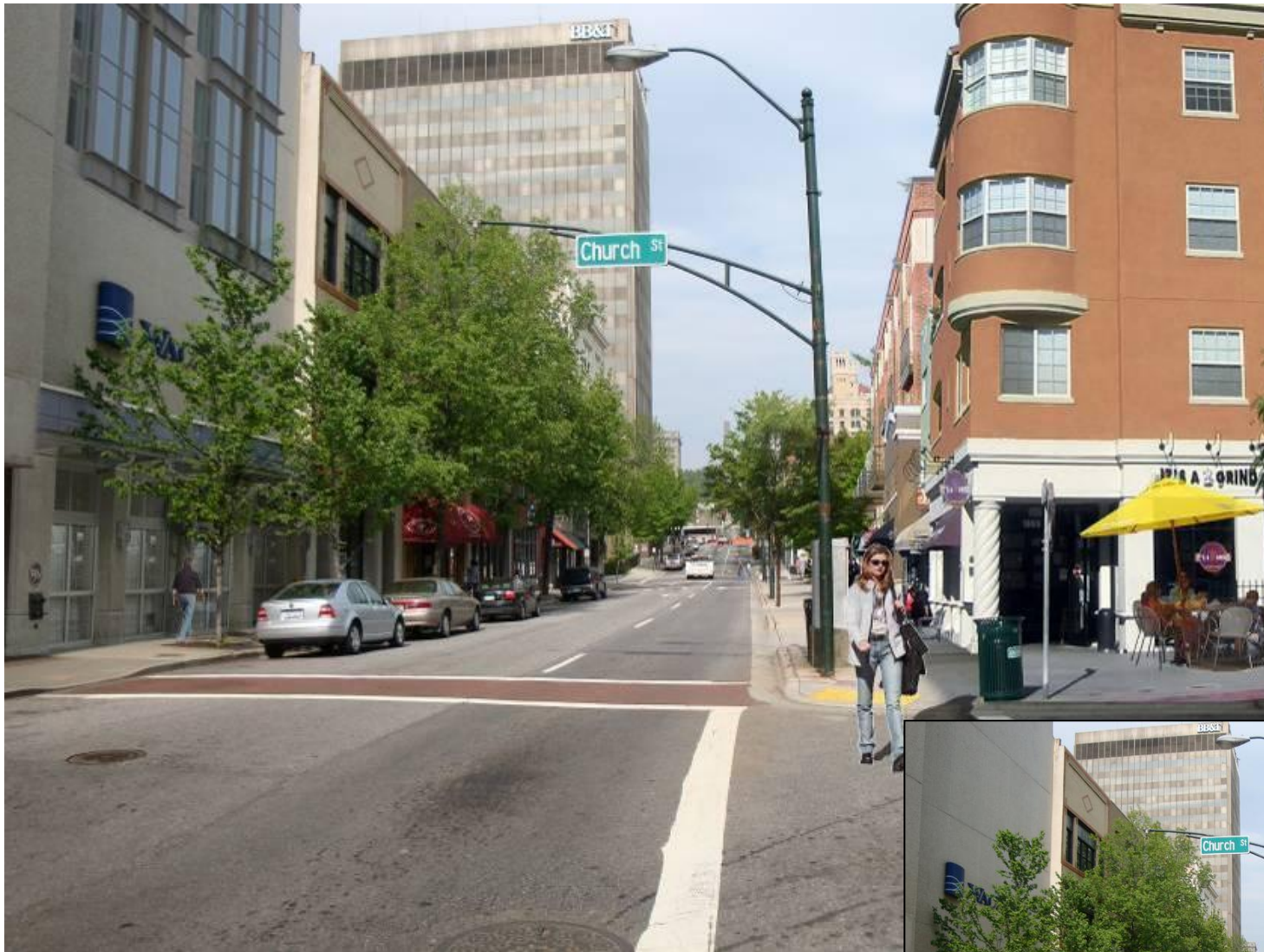


High-quality sidewalk materials and a tiered landscape edge diminish impact of the highway below this bridge in Atlanta – an example to follow where Montford and Flint Streets cross I-240.

- 2) Replacing and/or screening the BB&T loading docks and surface parking with occupied building space having an active street edge;
 - 3) Rehabilitating or redeveloping the former CVS store at Haywood with active ground-floor uses facing both College and Haywood; and
 - 4) Rehabilitating or redeveloping the Wachovia Bank building with active ground-floor lobby, retail or other use facing College as well as Haywood and Patton.
- The parking lot at Patton and South Lexington Streets should be redeveloped with active ground-floor uses

along Patton to create a continuously inviting walking environment between Pritchard Park and Pack Square.

- Bring more active ground floor uses to the east and south sides of Pritchard Park. Potential methods include façade renovations, creating an artist incubator space on the park, and more significant redevelopment of non-historic buildings.



TRADITIONAL DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

Pedestrian-oriented parking lot infill development along Patton—and façade improvements to existing buildings—would bring more spatial quality and vitality to Downtown.





TRADITIONAL DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

Adding appropriate new development on Haywood can help existing properties—historic or not—gain value.



Beaucatcher Gateway District

This district contains a number of significant commercial sites important to the downtown economy. At the same time, its redevelopment during the period of urban renewal has left it needing streets and buildings that make it truly *urban* again and connected to the Traditional Core. Commercial uses should continue to be emphasized in the district, particularly new and emerging ones. Densification of existing commercial sites through use of structured parking and/or expanded transit/shuttle service is encouraged. Any renovations or new construction should enhance area streets as inviting walking streets, as well as create memorable gateway landmarks to the Traditional Downtown District. Residential uses should also be considered to the extent they are market-supported, are proximate to existing residential downtown or in adjacent neighborhoods, and do not displace priority commercial uses.

○ **Land use:**

- Target area for commercial uses and high-value sectors of the HUB initiative
- Hospitality, leveraging excellent road access
- Increase extent of active ground floor uses that improve the pedestrian environment
- Housing is appropriate to the extent it does not displace important job centers
- Underused sites may be appropriate in near-term for satellite parking served by downtown shuttle



Beaucatcher Gateway is an important commercial area downtown, and could become still more important with gradual addition of still higher-value commercial development that ties into the Traditional Core.

- **Building height and density:**

- The intermediate 145' height applies to much of the district as a place whose proximity to the Traditional Core and transportation, and relatively large parcels, should be tapped to create further value
- The taller 265' height applies to sites flanking Central Street at Woodfin – to reinforce the corridor – and northeast of College and Charlotte, where tall buildings won't dominate City/County Plaza.

- **Gateways and connections:**

- New buildings and streetscape improvements should edge College Street as it approaches downtown, framing the view of downtown for those coming from Tunnel Road, and creating an unbroken link of dignified architecture and inviting sidewalks leading to the Traditional Core.
- Welcome people approaching downtown from I-240 with wayfinding signage, higher-value development and streetscape improvements along Charlotte.
- Use new development to reinforce Central Street as an important pedestrian connection past I-240; avoid solely auto-oriented uses.

- **Additional opportunities and priorities:**

- All commercial parcels lining I-240 have potential for higher-value redevelopment or renovations taking advantage of excellent highway visibility and access to the north, and opportunity for new pedestrian- and street-oriented connections to downtown on the south.
- Potential improvements on the YMCA site could contribute significantly as amenities to the downtown community and as support for improved walkability and streetscape along Woodfin and Central.

Eagle/Market District Eagle/Market holds a special place in downtown due to its important role in the African-American history of Asheville. While business enterprises, housing and institutions predominantly serving or operated by African-Americans are no longer confined to Eagle/Market, the district remains literally and symbolically an important place in the local community. Resident institutions have invested considerable time and effort in creating redevelopment proposals for the district, and these should proceed promptly to assist its revitalization. In the longer future, potential development of the Performing Arts Center and redevelopment in the South Charlotte Street (formerly Valley Street) corridor should further contribute to the identity and vitality of Eagle/Market.

○ **Land use:**

- All downtown uses are appropriate
- Added housing could be especially effective in linking the East End and downtown through a continuous series of residential blocks
- Commercial uses could also be appropriate, leveraging good street access, so long as they do not further separate the East End from downtown
- The proposed Performing Arts Center on Eagle Street should be programmed and designed with special emphasis on welcoming the Eagle/Market and East End community, as well as the larger city and region

○ **Building height and density:**

- The intermediate 145' height applies to nearly the entire district, offering development value to support desirable

redevelopment while also precluding taller buildings that could negatively impact important surrounding neighborhoods and public spaces.

- The taller 265' height is permitted for redevelopment of the southernmost DPW parcel area, offering potential of a landmark on the Biltmore Avenue approach to downtown and because the site's low elevation would diminish overall height.

○ **Gateways and connections:**

- Strong emphasis should be placed on transforming South Charlotte – and the city owned land along it – from a barrier to a connective seam to the East End.
- The best opportunities for improved pedestrian crossing occur at the Beaumont/Grail intersection and the pedestrian bridge at Eagle Street.

○ **Additional opportunities and priorities:**

- Any redevelopment planning, particularly on city-owned sites, should proactively involve the African American community of Eagle/Market and the East End to help restore and enfranchise a community heavily impacted by past urban renewal efforts.
- Eagle/Market Streets Development Corporation and Mount Zion Church should be encouraged to proceed now that supportive funding is available. These will have strong positive impacts on the traditional heart of the district.



Asheville has the very important opportunity to redevelop portions of the Department of Public Works sites used for parking and storage with housing or other uses that reconnect downtown with the East End and transform South Charlotte back into a true city street.

- Redevelopment initiatives planned by the Performing Arts Center should be programmed and designed to help link the East End and Downtown. It could significantly improve appeal and usefulness of the pedestrian bridge over South Charlotte.
- The district lies adjacent to important park resources serving not only itself and the East End but, increasingly, all downtown. Improve east-west pedestrian connections between downtown and MLK Park, The Stephens-Lee Recreational Center, McCormick Field, Memorial Stadium and the emerging park network ascending to the top of Beaucatcher Mountain.

South Slope District With significant land area and a number of commercial and light-industrial properties poised to undergo transitions to higher-value uses, this area contains some of the most extensive opportunities for downtown redevelopment. The topographic variation of the district from east to west, most visible along Hilliard Street as it crosses a series of ridges and valleys, naturally breaks the large area up into corridors having an intimacy that can help foster redevelopment by intensifying sense of place. Housing, already emerging here in significant quantities, is highly appropriate because the area's size and topography supports its emergence as a residential area, and because of its proximity to downtown jobs and services. Much of the district is also an appropriate location for relatively tall new buildings. Office, and retail uses are also appropriate here if they are compatible with housing, especially if they reinforce the Mission Hospital medical area, provide neighborhood-oriented retail and/or concentrate toward Asheland Avenue, Southside Street or the Traditional Downtown. Redevelopment and streetscape improvements should aim to create a dignified entrance to downtown from the south.

○ **Land use:**

- All downtown land uses are appropriate
- The district is especially appropriate from one or more distinct new residential neighborhoods.
- Commercial uses are also appropriate, especially along the Asheland, Southside and Biltmore corridors. However, the existing predominance of auto-

oriented uses should give over to commercial uses and buildings that are mainly pedestrian-oriented

- Medical-related uses would be especially appropriate where shown, due to proximity to the Mission Hospital campus. These uses could range from doctors' offices to satellite hospital facilities to workforce housing for hospital staff (such housing would be appropriate throughout the district).
- Relatively lower-value sites could be appropriate near-term locations for commuter parking served by the downtown shuttle





The intersection of Biltmore and Southside is an important gateway to downtown from Biltmore Village and other points south. It should be marked with high value uses that could include housing, medical uses related to the nearby Mission Hospital, or a combination of these.



○ **Building height and density:**

- A majority of the South Slope District is appropriate for taller 265' heights. This stems from the presence of relatively few sensitive sites or buildings compared to the Traditional Core; the slope itself, which helps reduce shadow impacts and absolute height of tall buildings; the presence of some larger parcels that could accommodate significant development; and the desirability of high-value development to spur significant residential population and public realm investment in the area.
- The intermediate 145' height range is appropriate in other areas close to more sensitive public spaces, historic buildings or established neighborhoods.

○ **Gateways and connections:**

- The Biltmore/Southside and Ashel- and/Southside/McDowell intersections are important entrances to downtown from points south including Biltmore Village, I-40 and Mission Hospital, which is a regional destination in itself. Improve both intersections with wayfinding signage, streetscape improvements and dignified new development of significant scale and value

○ **Additional opportunities and priorities:**

- Residential neighborhood centers could emerge in several places, reinforcing local sense of place. The recent Lexington Station mixed-use development has already established a center of activity around South Lexington and Hilliard. The

Zona Lofts development under way, and potential future residential redevelopment nearby, should reinforce a distinct neighborhood at the lower end of South Slope. The intersection of Hilliard and Coxe with existing housing, landmark buildings and sites opportune for redevelopment, could become another neighborhood center.

- Major street corridors should also become special places. Biltmore south of Hilliard should gain an intensity and continuity of character matching that which exists further north. Asheland needs still more deliberate fashioning as a corridor to help transform into a walkable street with higher-value uses. Its generous width provides extra opportunity for street trees, improved sidewalks, on-street parking, bike lanes and other elements that can reduce its current sense of domination by the auto.

**Pat-
ton/River
Gateway
District**

This district also holds tremendous opportunity as a key downtown gateway and place for



Patton can become a proud, walkable downtown street lined with buildings that contain active storefronts as well as important new jobs and places to live.

redevelopment. The potential of the National Climatic Data Center to become the heart of a significant zone for climate research means that appropriate sites for research development need to be maintained in the district in walking distance to the NCDC and downtown amenities. The district could also accommodate significant residential and hotel development, some of it in areas appropriate for tall buildings. Any significant redevelopment demand should be directed to the Patton Avenue corridor to enhance its appearance and walkability west of Pritchard Park, lending it the dignity it deserves as one of downtown's premier entrances. The proposed reclamation of Patton as a walkable street extending all the way to the French Broad River, through reconstruction of the present I-26/I-240/Patton highway interchange, would dramatically enhance the already strong potential of this district.

○ **Land use:**

- Target area for commercial uses and high-value sectors of the HUB initiative. NCDC-related uses should be within an inviting 5- to 10-minute walk of the NCDC and existing amenities and preferably, services in the Traditional Core. Large-footprint research and office buildings could be located in several ways: placed in series along Patton; grouped north and west of the NCDC; grouped south of Patton; or some combination of these locations
- Hospitality is also highly appropriate due to highway access and walkable proximity to the Traditional Core, especially Pritchard Park and the Grove Arcade

- Housing, too, is highly appropriate. Housing could take a variety of forms in different portions of the district: moderate scale south of Patton to transition to existing neighborhoods to the south and west; tall landmark towers at the foot of Patton; tall or intermediate height buildings along the Haywood ridge toward Battery Hill.
- Active ground floor uses, especially but not limited to retail, should be a priority along Patton. These would significantly help extend the active pedestrian environment that does not now extend west beyond Pritchard Park

○ **Building height and density:**

- Most of the district is appropriate for taller 265' heights, due to presence of relatively few sensitive public spaces or historic buildings; the ground slope, which helps reduce shadow impacts and absolute height of tall buildings; the presence of some larger parcels that could accommodate significant development; and the desirability of high-value development to spur significant redevelopment and form a proud gateway along Patton
- The 145' intermediate height is appropriate along much of Patton itself, to protect comfortable pedestrian scale, and at edges transitioning to other neighborhoods

○ **Gateways and connections:**

- Patton is a premier gateway from highways to the west. It should be reinforced as such by extending the generally good, walkable qualities of Patton in the Traditional Core

west from Pritchard Park, with active ground floor uses and substantial buildings lining the street. Adding new development of significant size and architectural quality where Patton meets Clingman, Haywood and highway access would add a further dramatic touch.

- The district should also connect to the intensifying residential corridor along Clingman toward the River Arts district. This would best be accomplished with new housing continuing the residential areas into downtown via the Hilliard, Haywood and possibly Patton corridors.

- The Montford Street connection to downtown should be improved as described in the Traditional Core district section above

- **Additional opportunities and priorities:**

- Ongoing research and discussion into the possible extension of Patton as a city street to and across the French Broad River, made possible by relocation of I-240 and I-26, would improve still further the opportunity Patton offers as a signature downtown walking street and place of significant addresses and jobs.

TARGETING PRESERVATION AND CHANGE

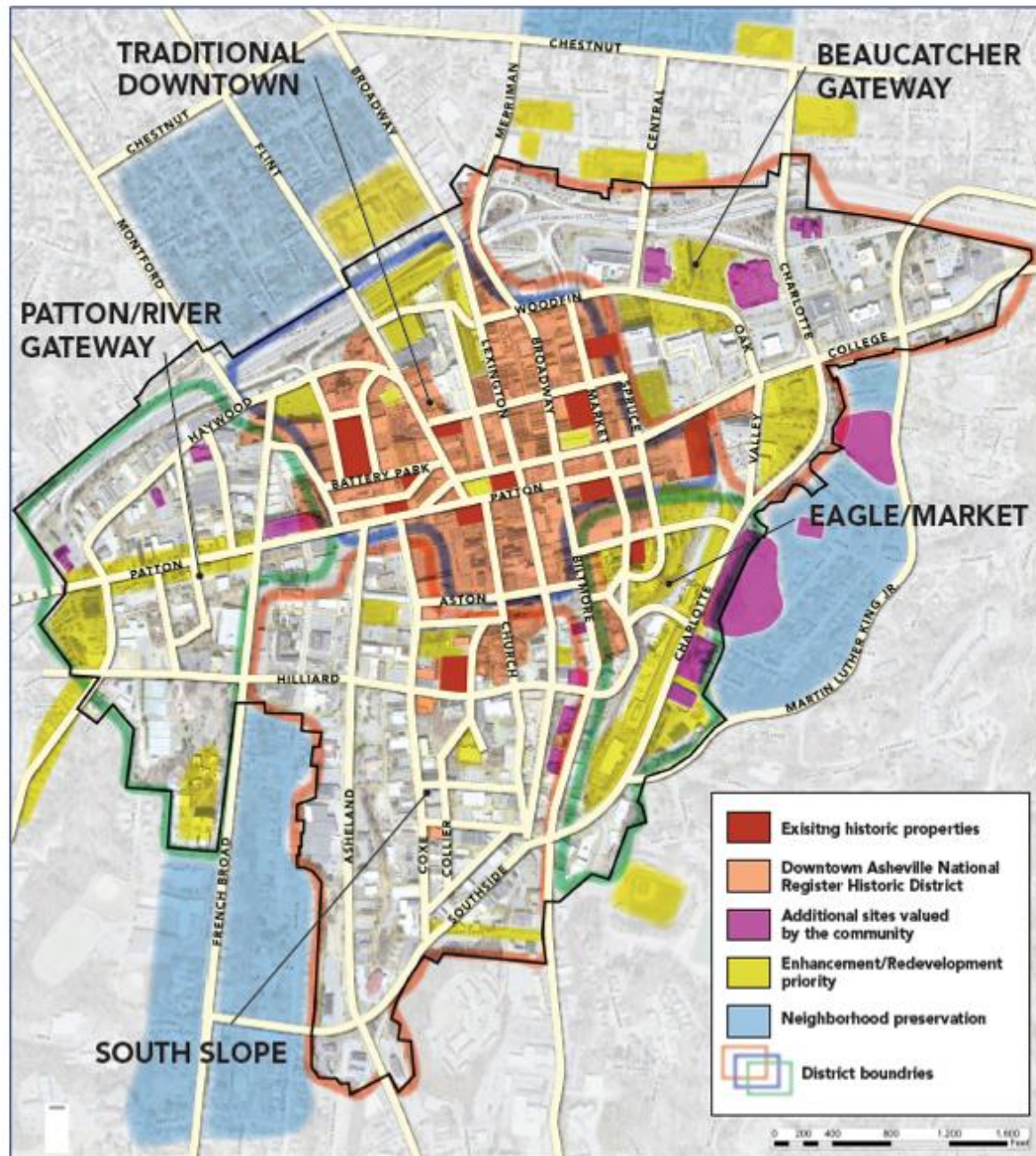


Figure 4 Targeting Preservation and Change diagram

LAND USE EMPHASIS AREAS

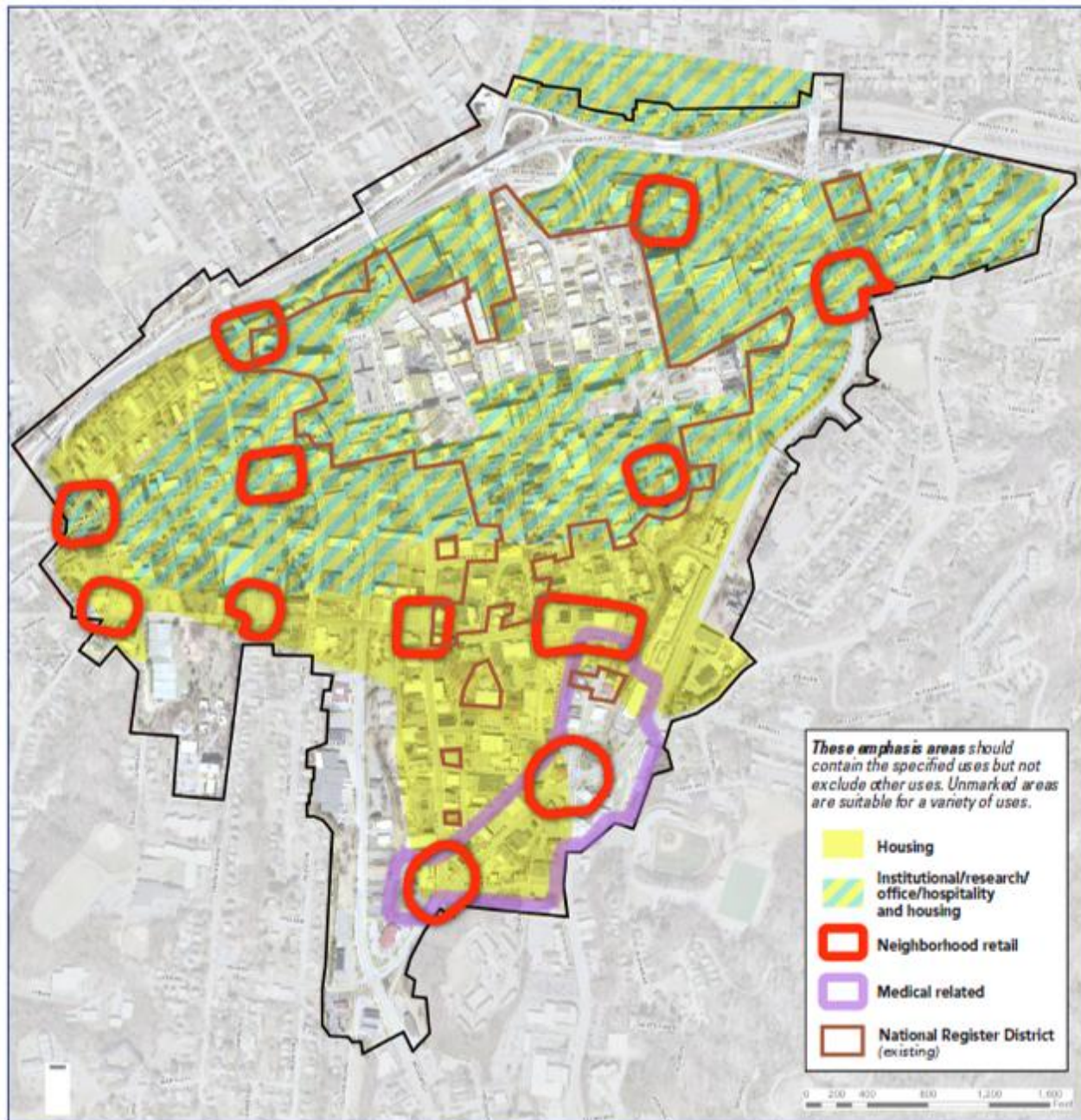


Figure 5 Land Use Emphasis Areas diagram

STREET HIERARCHY

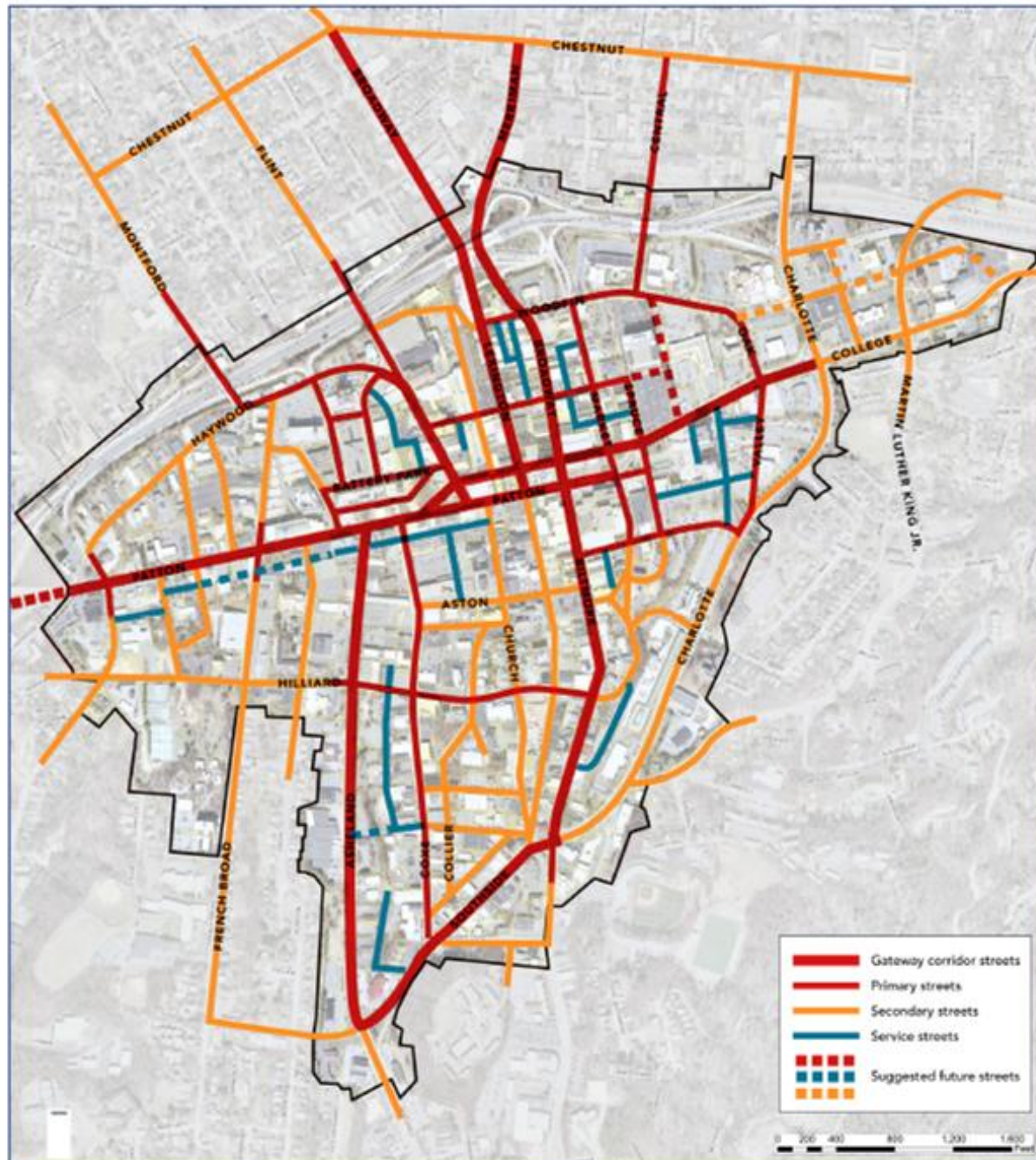


Figure 6 Street Hierarchy diagram

BICYCLE NETWORK

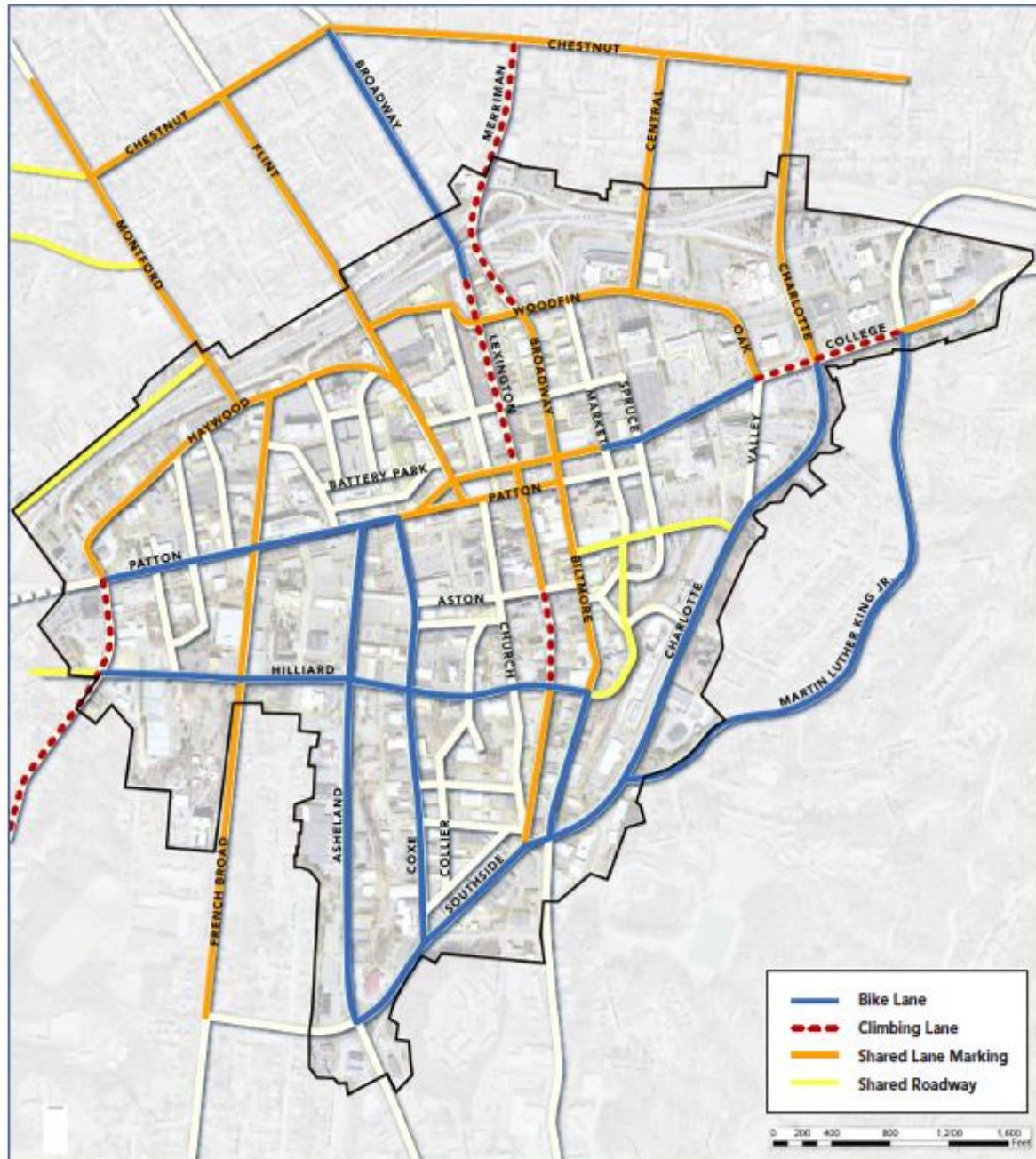


Figure 7 Bicycle Network diagram

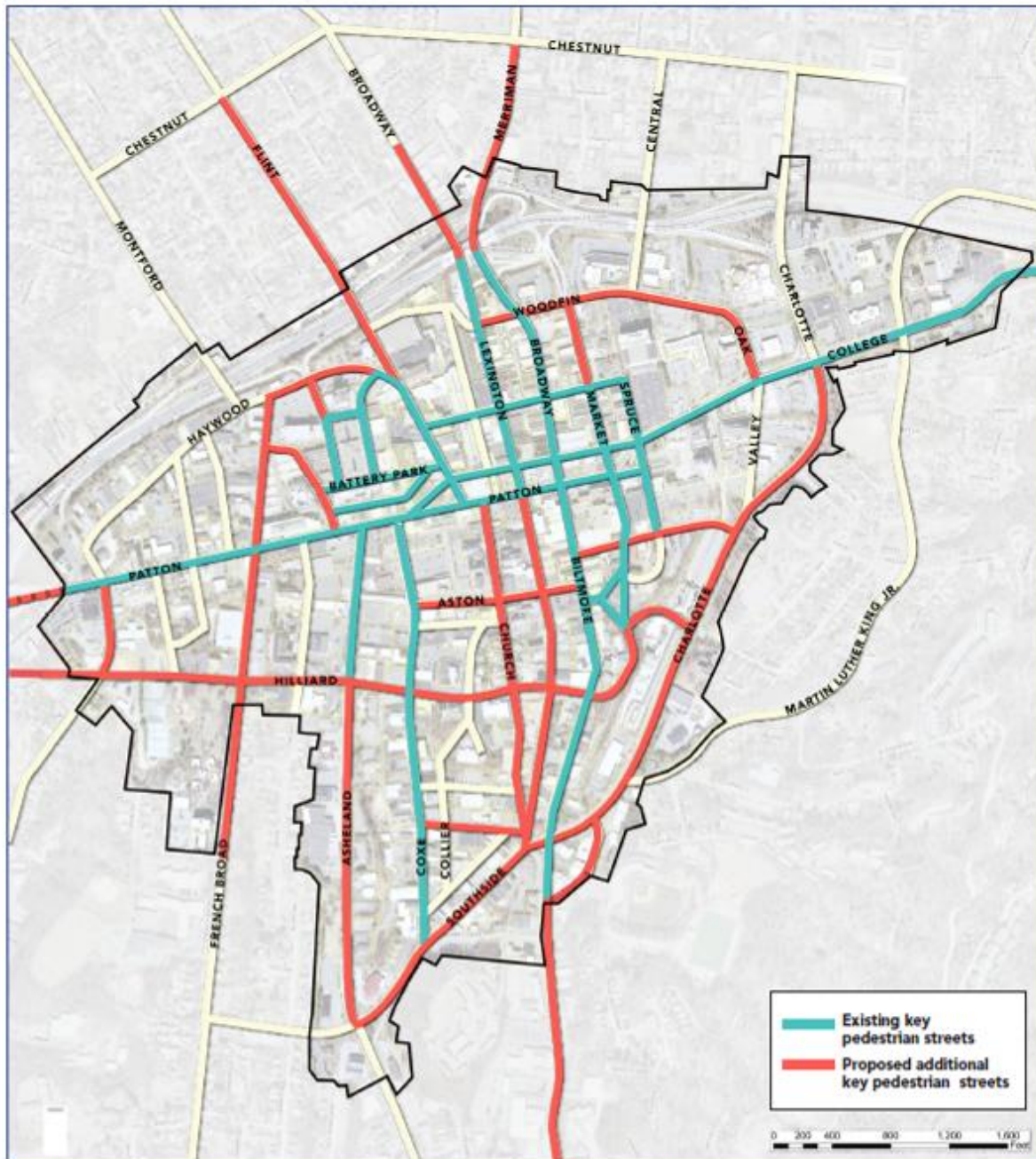


Figure 8 Priority Pedestrian Streets diagram

PARKS AND GREENWAYS

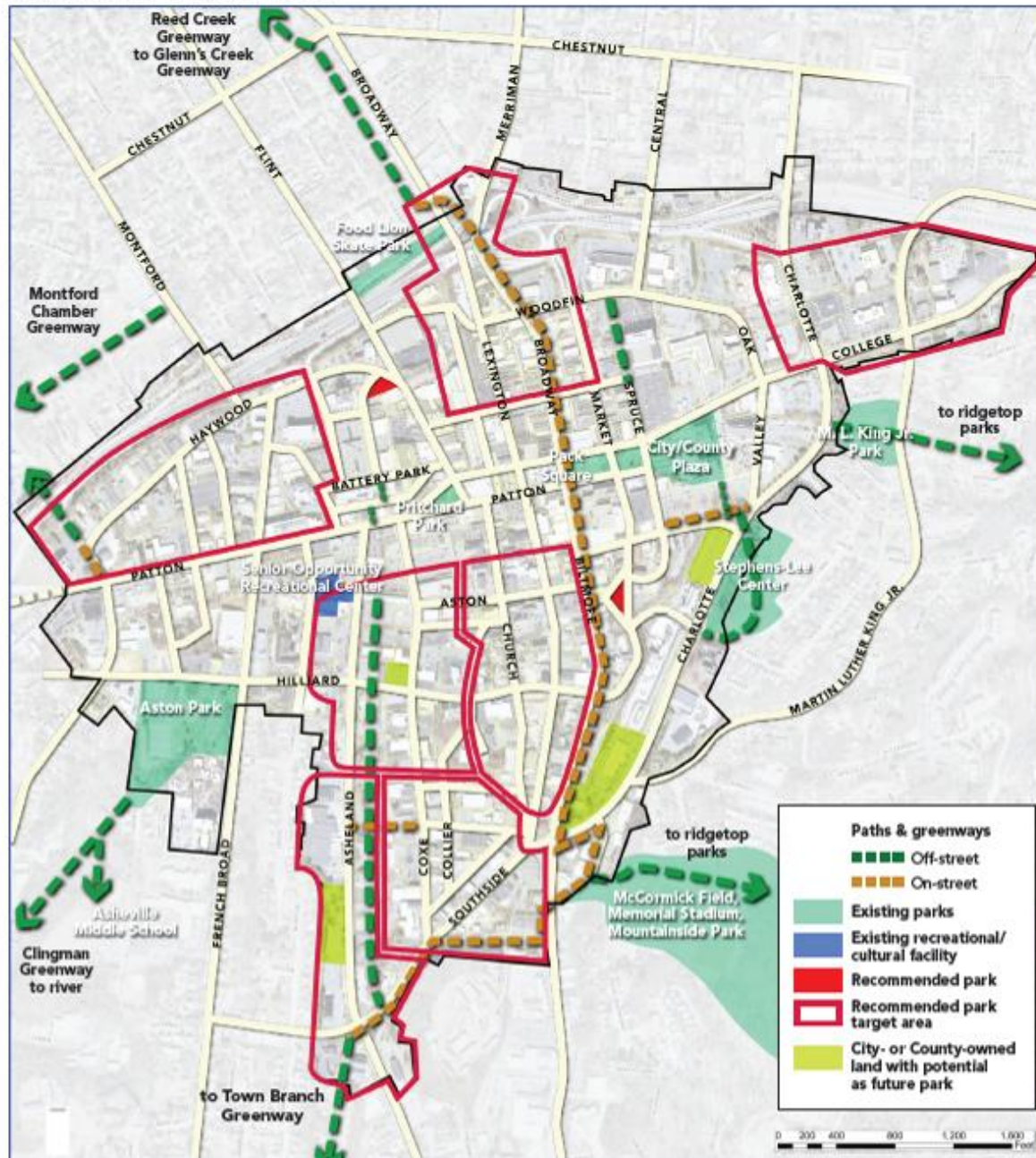


Figure 9 Parks and Greenways diagram

appendix

Shaping Downtown

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Shape building form to promote quality of place.

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- *Figure 9*— This diagram demonstrates the application of the height and massing guidelines proposed in Strategy 4 to the Jackson building
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- *Figure 13,14*— These images demonstrate the application of the height and massing guidelines proposed in Strategy 4 to the Rennasaince Hotel site
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DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS SUPPLEMENTING CORE STRATEGY ELEMENTS

(Number references correspond to superscript numbers in main strategy text.)

¹⁴ Step back all building elements from the Context Transition Edge a distance at least one-and-one-half times their height. Where sites abut a residentially zoned property, a 15-foot setback should be provided from that property. Two-stories of height should be permitted where current zoning allows.

¹⁵ The Intermediate Height Zone threshold is 145-feet (up to 15-stories).

¹⁶ The Tallest Height Zone threshold is 265-feet (up to 27-stories).

¹⁷ Require that no point in a public park or plaza space, or any locally-designated landmark building with sun-dependant features be shaded by a new building for more than two hours between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm, observed on the equinox. Where no right-of-way exists between the proposed project and the public space, a 50-foot buffer—free of any shadow regulations—may be observed.

¹⁸ In new buildings proposed within 200-feet of listed historic buildings, require the front step-back to occur within five-feet (vertically) of the average height of the historic building.

¹⁹ Require front façade step-backs of at least ten-feet once a building's height equals the width of the principal street's right-

of-way along its front. Building edges along service class streets should be exempt from this requirement. (See the *Street Hierarchy* diagram for clarification of street types.) Where front or side stepbacks would reduce a buildings otherwise allowable floorplate by more than 10%, such stepbacks should not be required. For buildings with multiple street frontages, each façade should be required to meet the stepback requirement above the streetwall (or their alternatives) accordingly. At street intersections, the taller streetwall height should be permitted to wrap around the corner for up to 30-feet of the other façade. Building facades may be exempt from the 10-foot front stepback if that building face is set back from the street edge a distance of at least 10-feet and that space is publicly accessible and has an active-ground floor use.

²⁰ As an alternative to the front stepback requirement, for buildings rising to or below the 75-foot height threshold, require building mass above the established streetwall to step-back least a total of 40-feet from adjacent side property lines, whether that land is developed or undeveloped. The 40-feet may be accommodated through any distribution or combination amongst the building sides. In the event that a development (such as the Jackson building) fronts multiple streets, allow the side stepback option or its equivalent air-rights option to be accommodated through any combination or distribution amongst the building

sides. As an alternative to the front stepback requirement, for buildings rising above the 75-foot height threshold, require building mass above the established streetwall to step-back a distance at least equal to the length of the primary façade that protrudes above the streetwall from adjacent side property lines, whether that land is developed or undeveloped. The stepback distance may be accommodated through any distribution or combination amongst the building sides. Where front or side stepbacks would reduce a buildings otherwise allowable floorplate by more than 10%, such stepbacks should not be required. In the event that a development (such as the Jackson building) fronts multiple streets, allow the side stepback option or its equivalent air-rights option to be accommodated through any combination or distribution amongst the building sides.

²³ On parcels 20,000 square feet or larger, limit floorplates above the 75-foot height threshold to 30-percent of the site area. On parcels smaller than 20,000 square feet, limit the gross area of floorplates above the 75-foot height threshold to 6,000 square feet.

²⁴ Avoid “slabs” by limiting maximum overall horizontal floorplate dimensions above the required step-back to 150-feet.

²⁵ Require side facades to be at least 25-percent glazing.

²⁶ Designated public view corridors are 200-feet wide. Regardless of height, all buildings within view corridors should provide illustrations of existing and proposed ground-level views at vista point locations of any affected view corridors. See the *View Corridors* diagram in the appendix for exact view corridor and vista point locations.

²⁷ For buildings over 75-feet, illustrations should be provided of existing and proposed ground-level views at external vista points such as: College Street at the Tunnel Edge; Biltmore Avenue at Short Coxe Avenue; Merrimon Avenue at Gracelyn Street; Town Mountain Road from the bridge over I-240; I-240 at the bridge over the French Broad River; and from Stephens Lee Park at the Edible Gardens. See the *External Vista Points* diagram in the appendix for clarification of vista point locations.

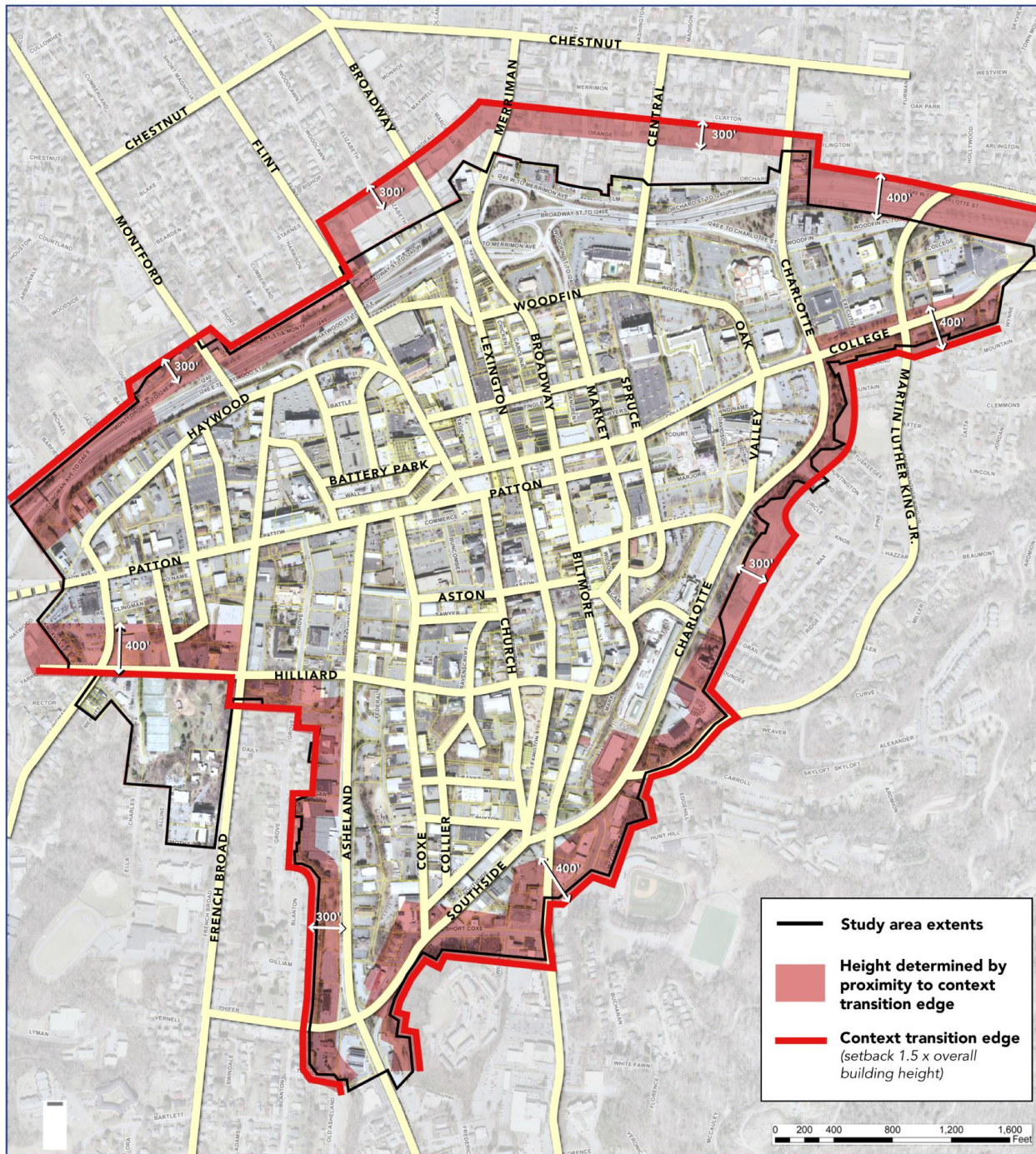


Figure 1 Context Transition Edge diagram

CONTEXT TRANSITION

building walls of any elevation shall be set back from the Context Transition Edge (indicated on the Height Zone map) a distance equal to at least 1.5 times their height.

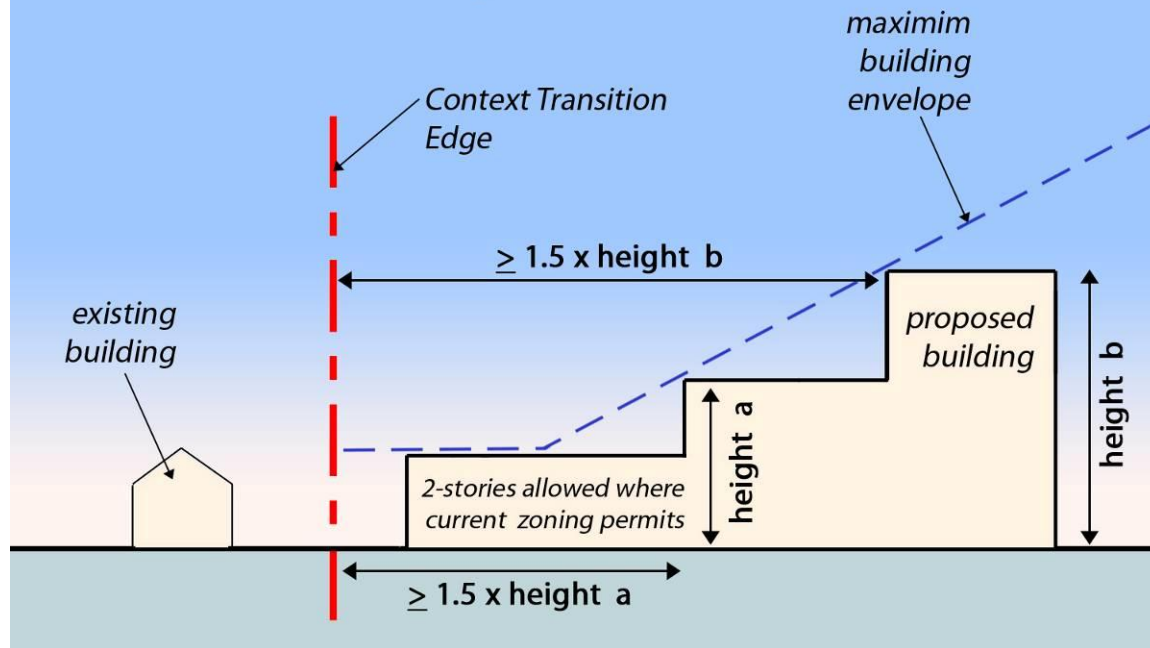


Figure 2 The Context Transition Edge is intended to create appropriate height transitions between downtown buildings and the surrounding neighborhoods.

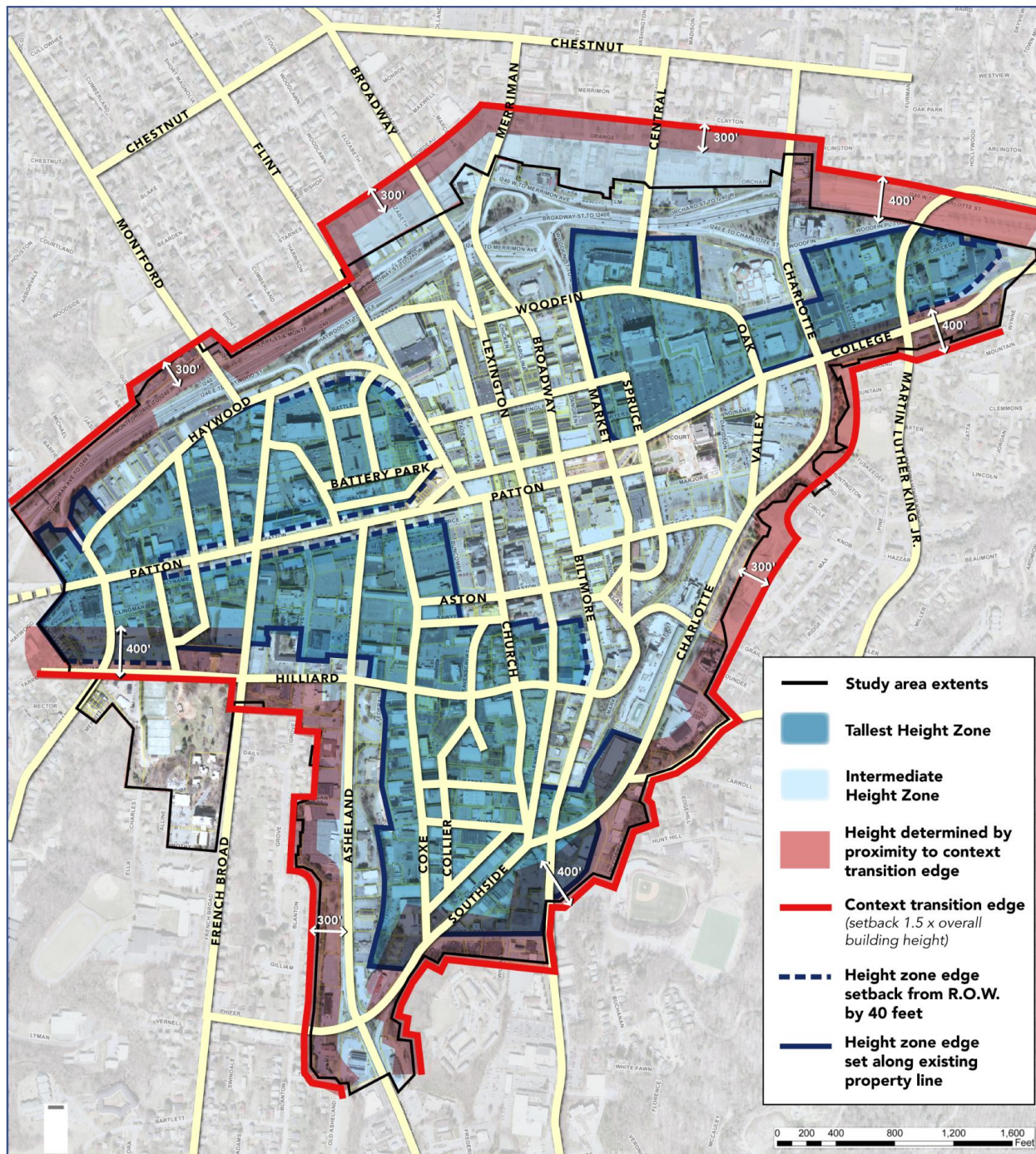


Figure 3 Building Height Zone diagram

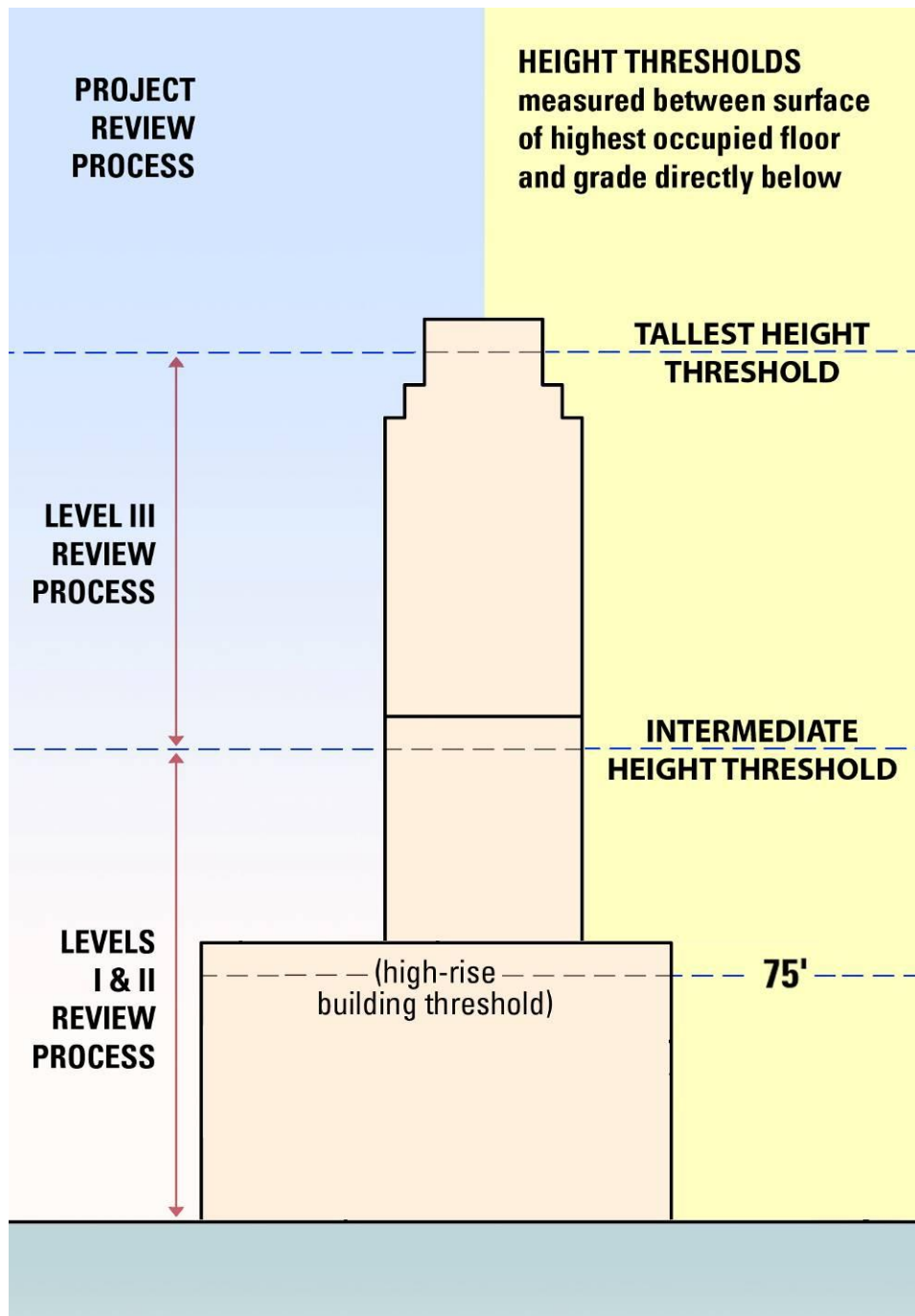
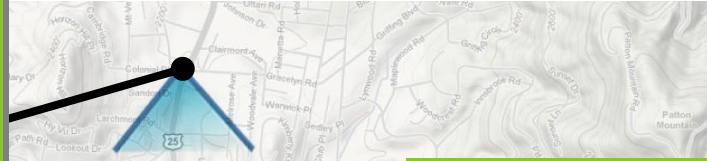


Figure 4 Project Review Process diagram. 145-feet should be considered as the Intermediate Height threshold. 265-feet should be considered the Tallest Height threshold.

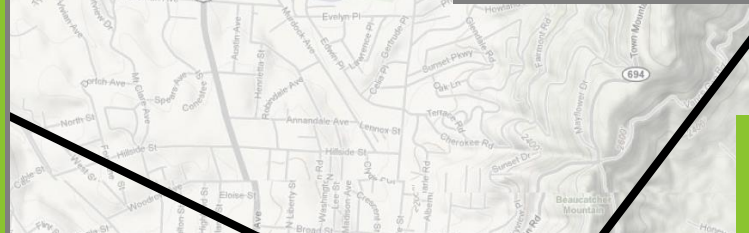
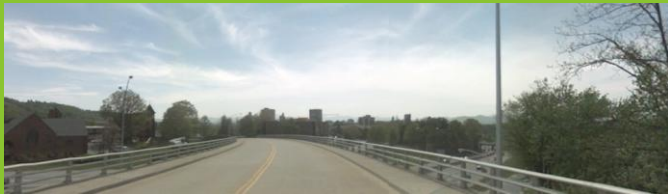
Merrimon Avenue at Gracelyn Street



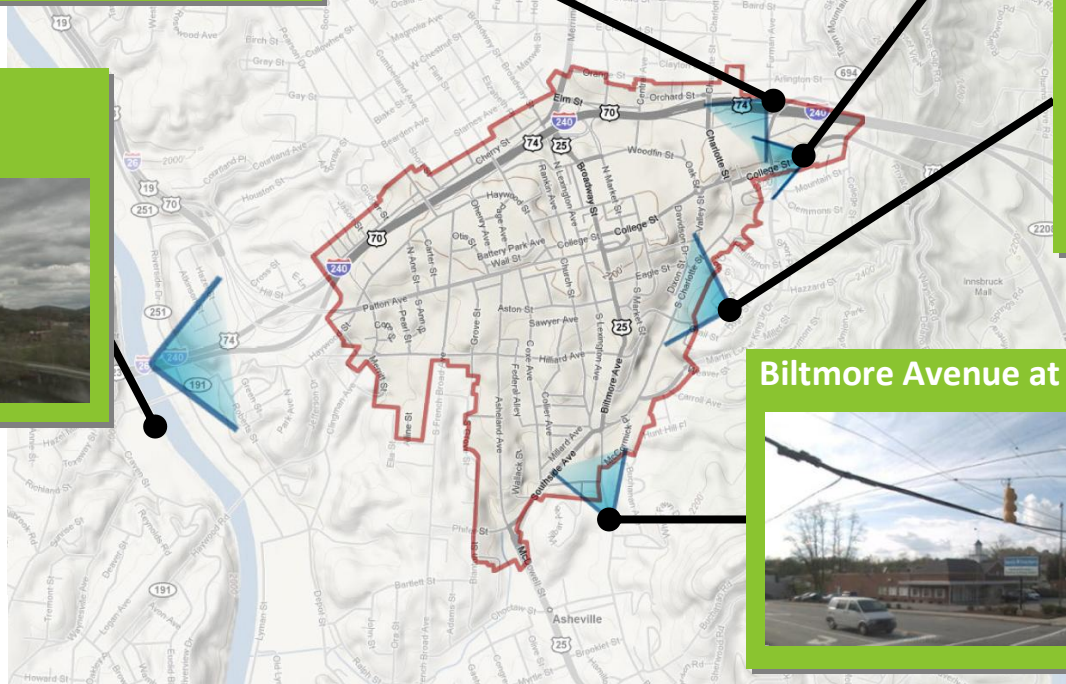
College Street at Tunnel Edge



Town Mountain Road at bridge over I-240



I-240 at bridge over the French Broad River



Stephens Lee Park at Edible Gardens



Biltmore Avenue at Short Coxe Avenue



External Vista Points
diagram

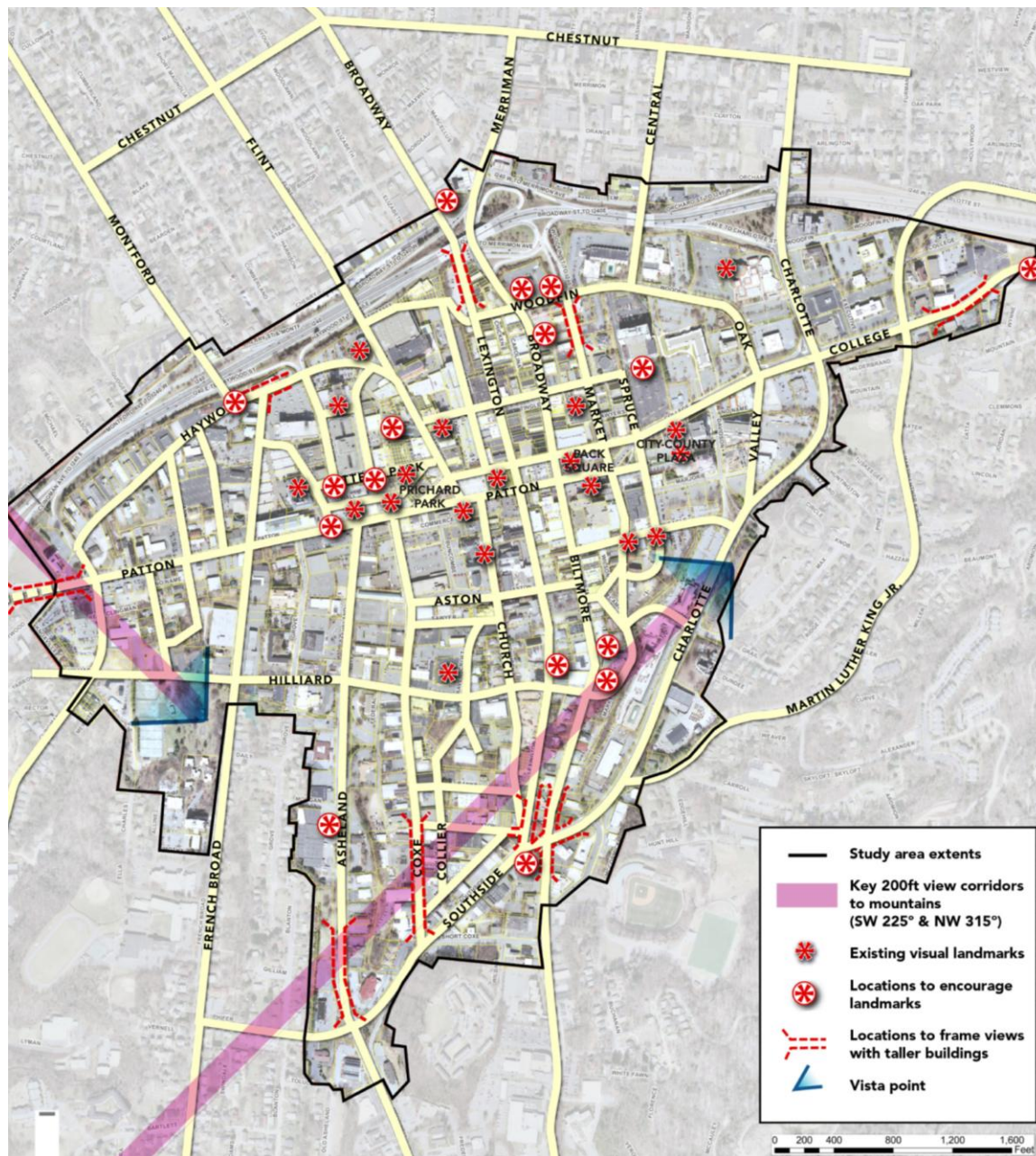
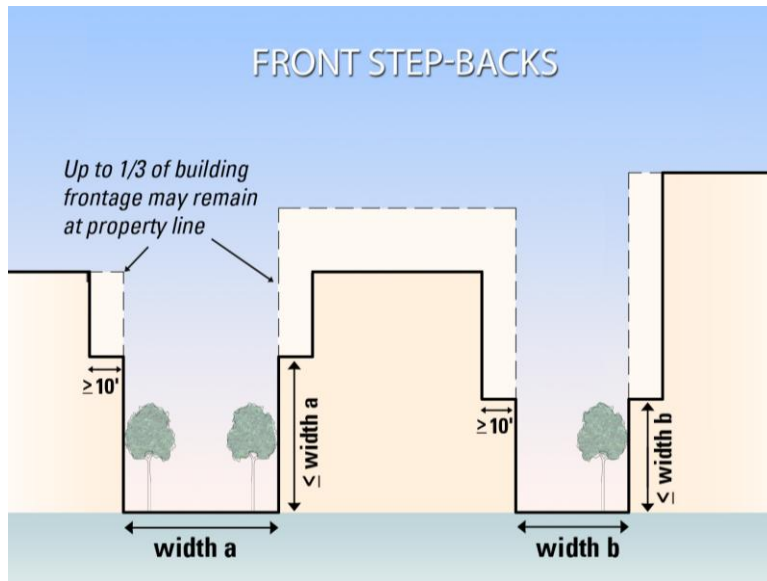
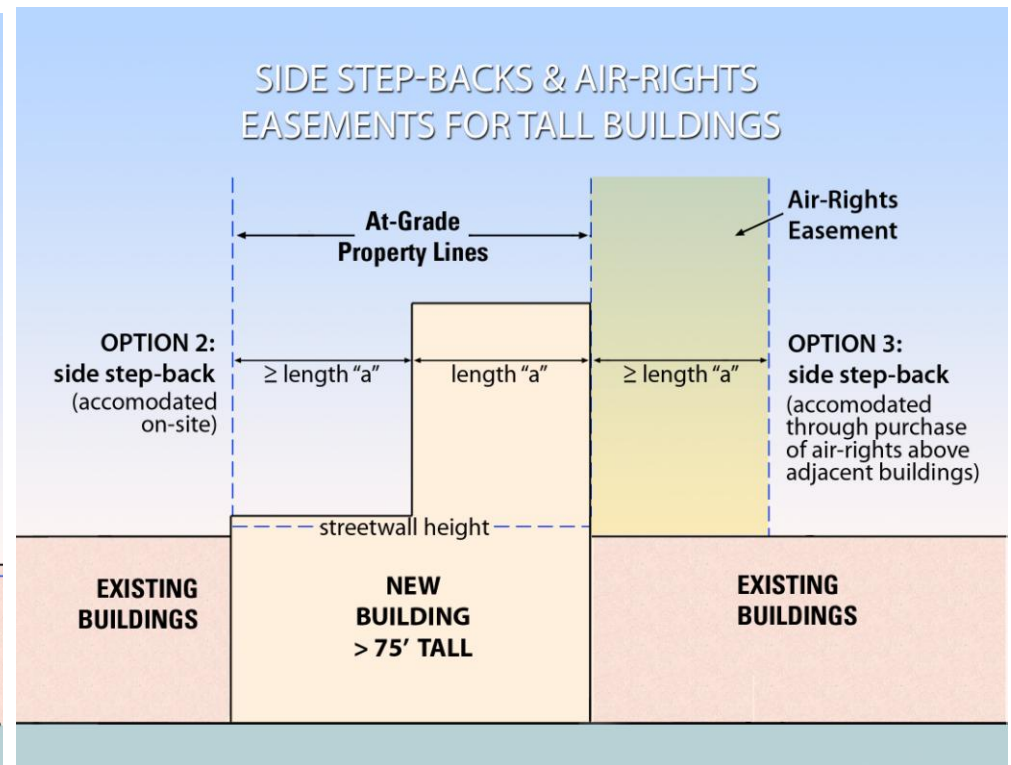
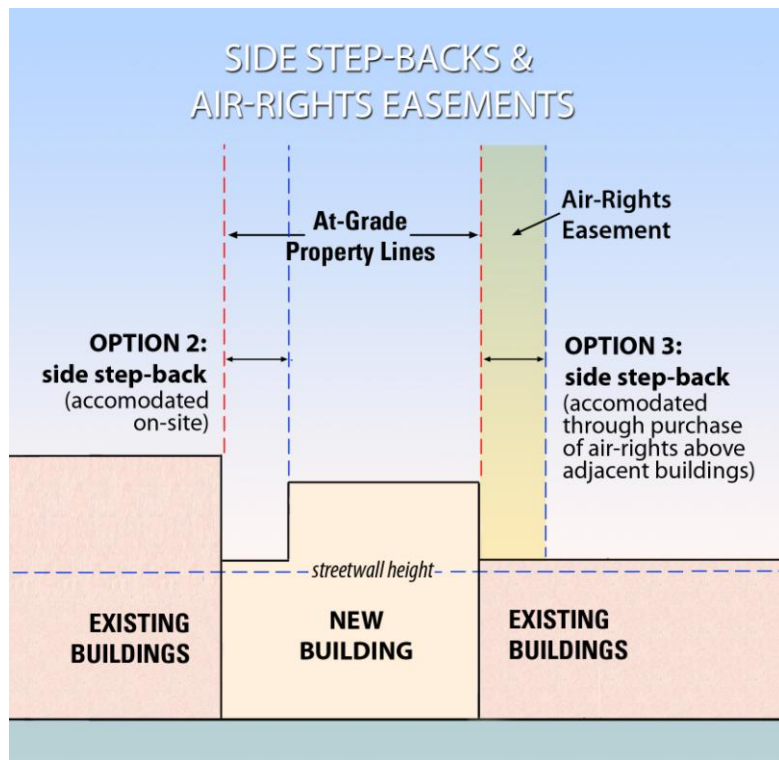


Figure 5 View Corridors diagram



Figures 6-8 Front and side stepbacks are intended to accomplish several goals:

- Introduce clear view corridors between building volumes
- Accommodate reasonable levels of privacy and daylight between buildings
- Accommodate reasonable amounts of direct sunlight to all private rooftops and to public parks
- Avoid abrupt height changes between downtown buildings and to the surrounding neighborhoods



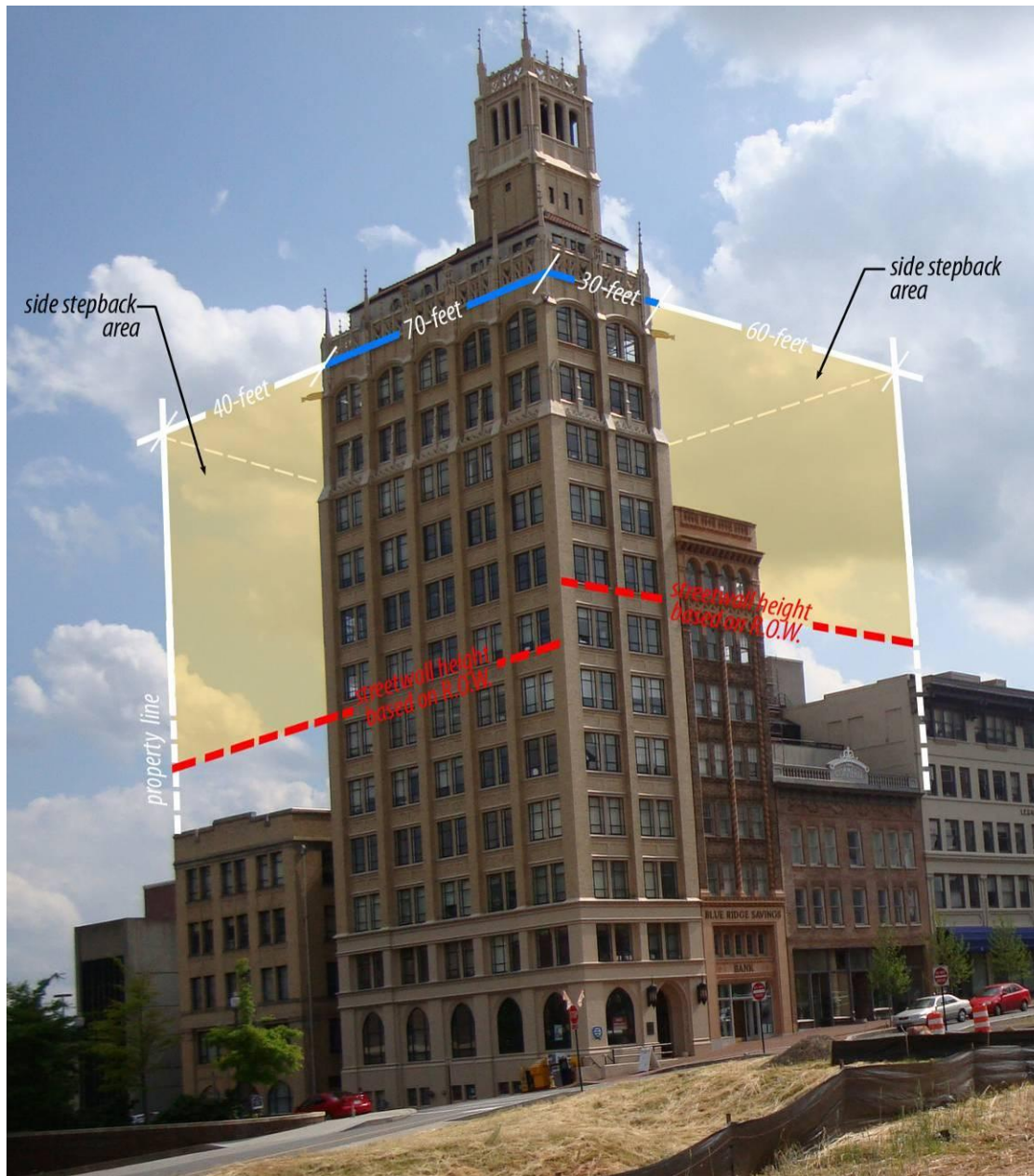
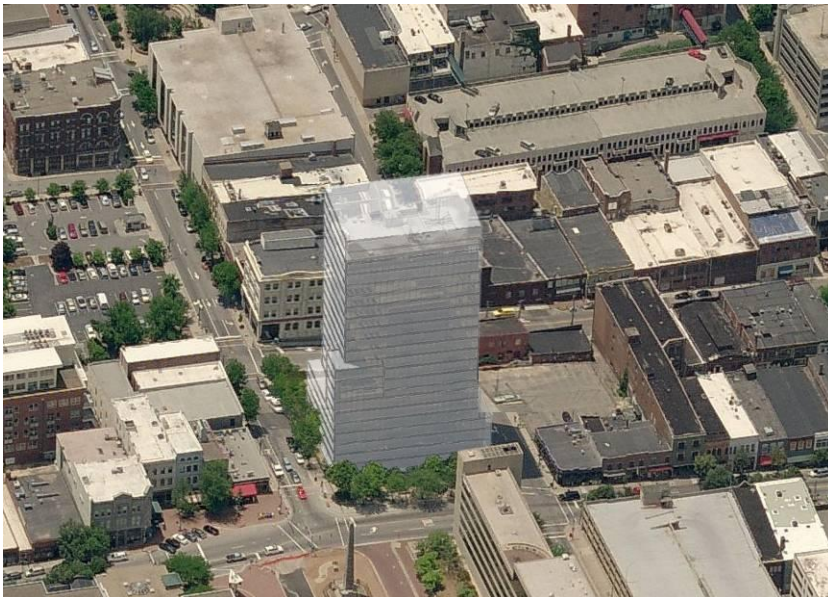
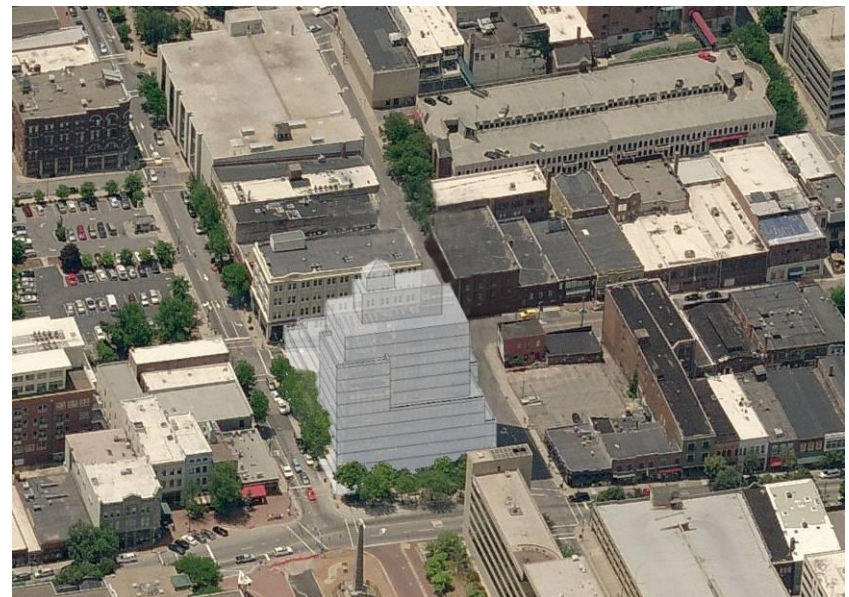
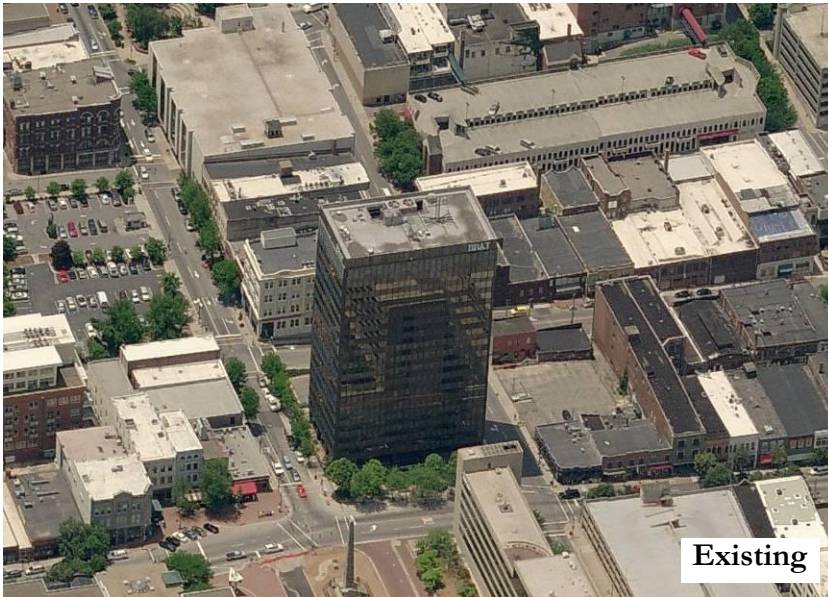


Figure 9 In the event that a development fronts multiple streets, the side stepback option or its equivalent air-rights option may be accommodated through any combination or distribution amongst the building sides.

For example, the Jackson building fronts two public streets. If built new today, it would comply with the side step-back option requirement (side stepbacks equivalent to a length of the façade that protrudes above the 75-foot level) by distributing these stepbacks among the two streets.

Of the façades that abut public streets and protrude above the 75-foot level, their measurements are approximately 30-feet along S. Pack Square, and 70-feet along Market Street. Since the development fronts more than one public street, these two façade lengths can be added together, to total 100-feet, and a side stepback equal to 100-feet must be provided above the 75-foot level, in any distribution, amongst the two sides. A side stepback of approximately 40-feet has been provided above the 75-foot level along Market Street. A side stepback of approximately 60-feet has been provided above the 75-foot level along S. Pack Square. Combined, the side stepbacks total 100-feet, equivalent to combined façade width.



Figures 10-12 - These images demonstrate the application of the height and massing guidelines proposed in Strategy 4 to the BB&T site. Each of the study images contains the same or more floor area as the existing building.



Figures 13,14 - These images demonstrate the application of the height and massing guidelines proposed in Strategy 4 to the Renaissance Hotel site. The study image contains the same floor area as the existing building.



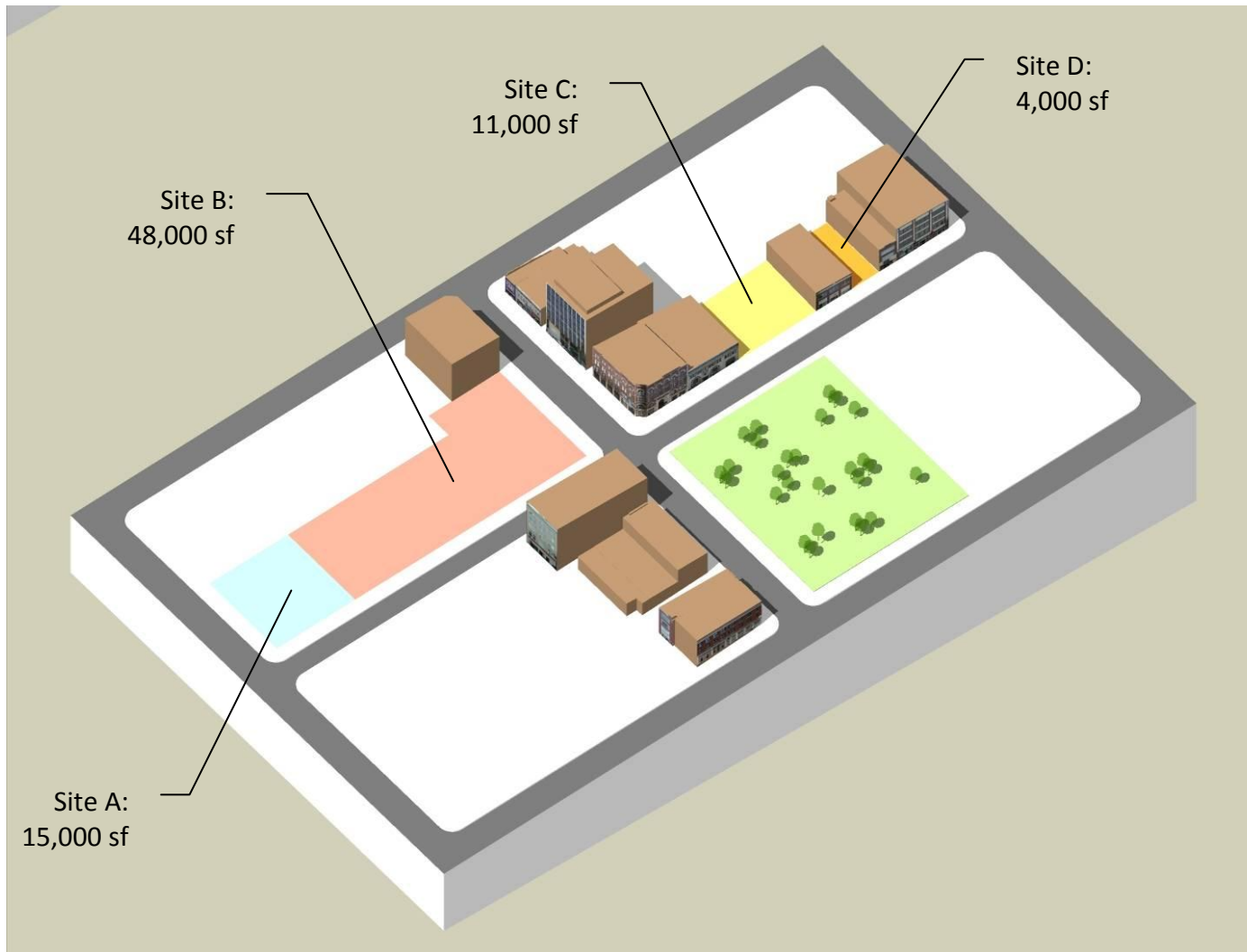


Figure 15 Introduction to the development scenarios on four hypothetical building sites, ranging in lot size from 4,000 square feet to 48,000 square feet. These scenarios illustrate the effects of proposed building height and massing controls.

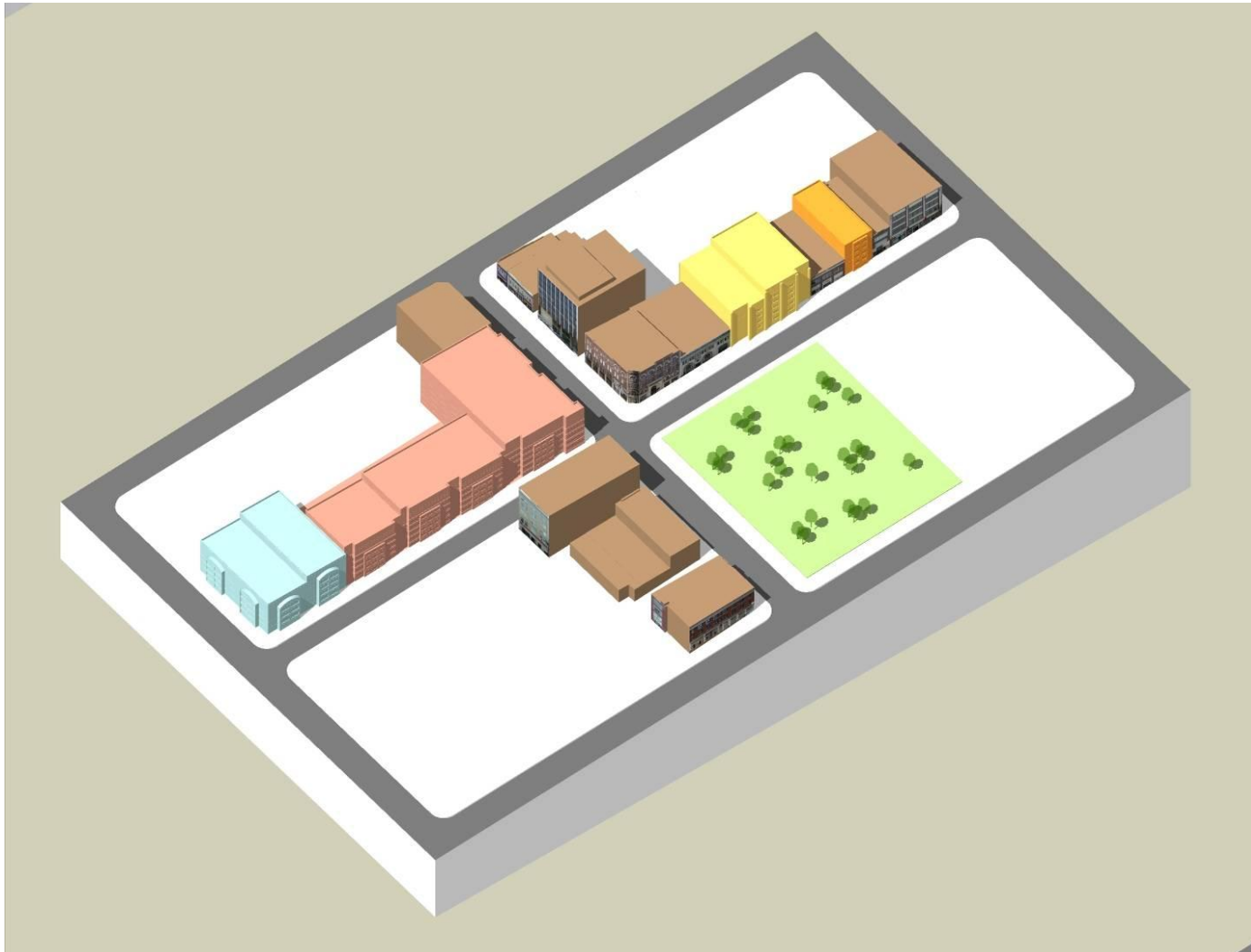


Figure 16 45-foot development height

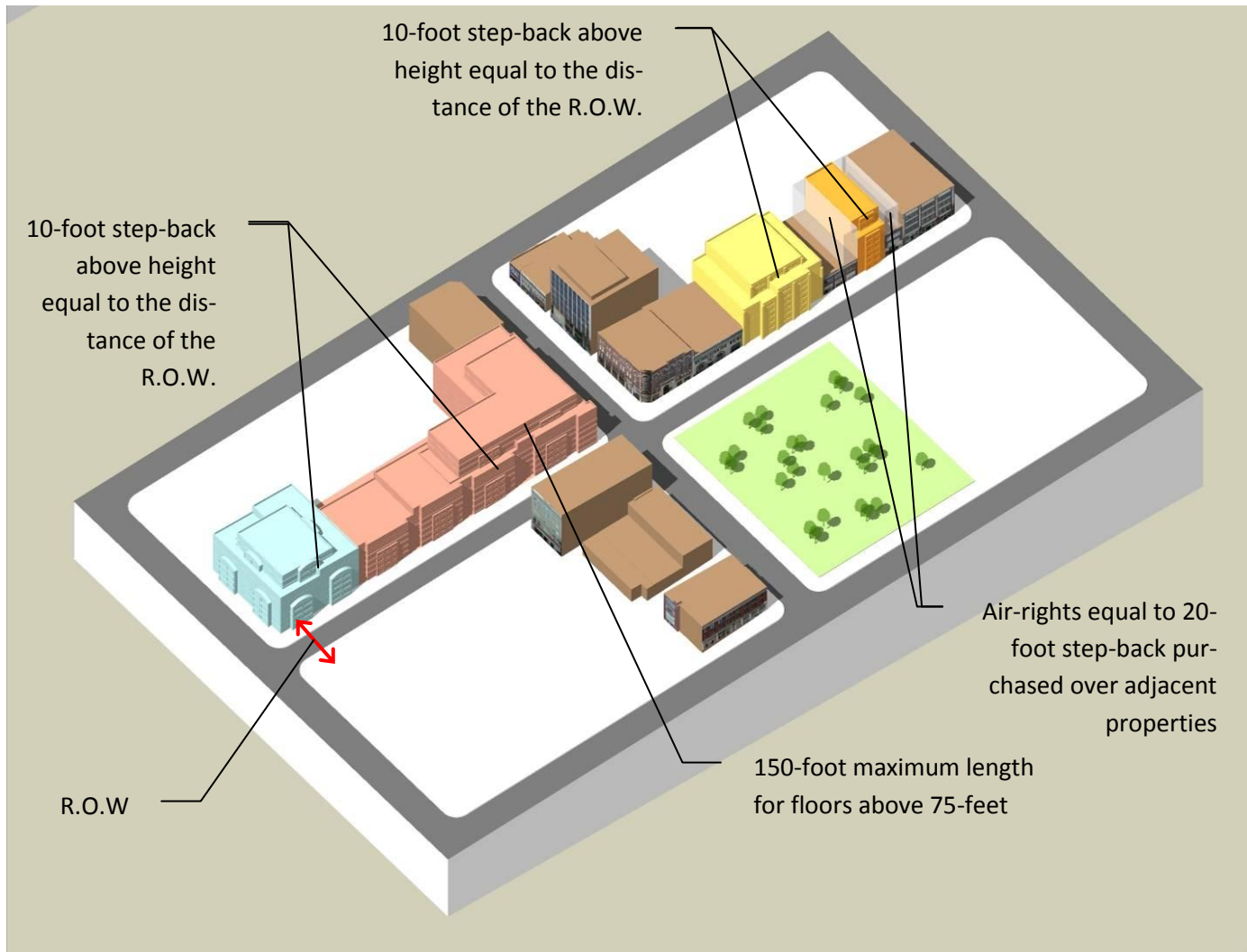


Figure 17 75-foot development height, with 10-foot step-backs from the street above the established street-wall

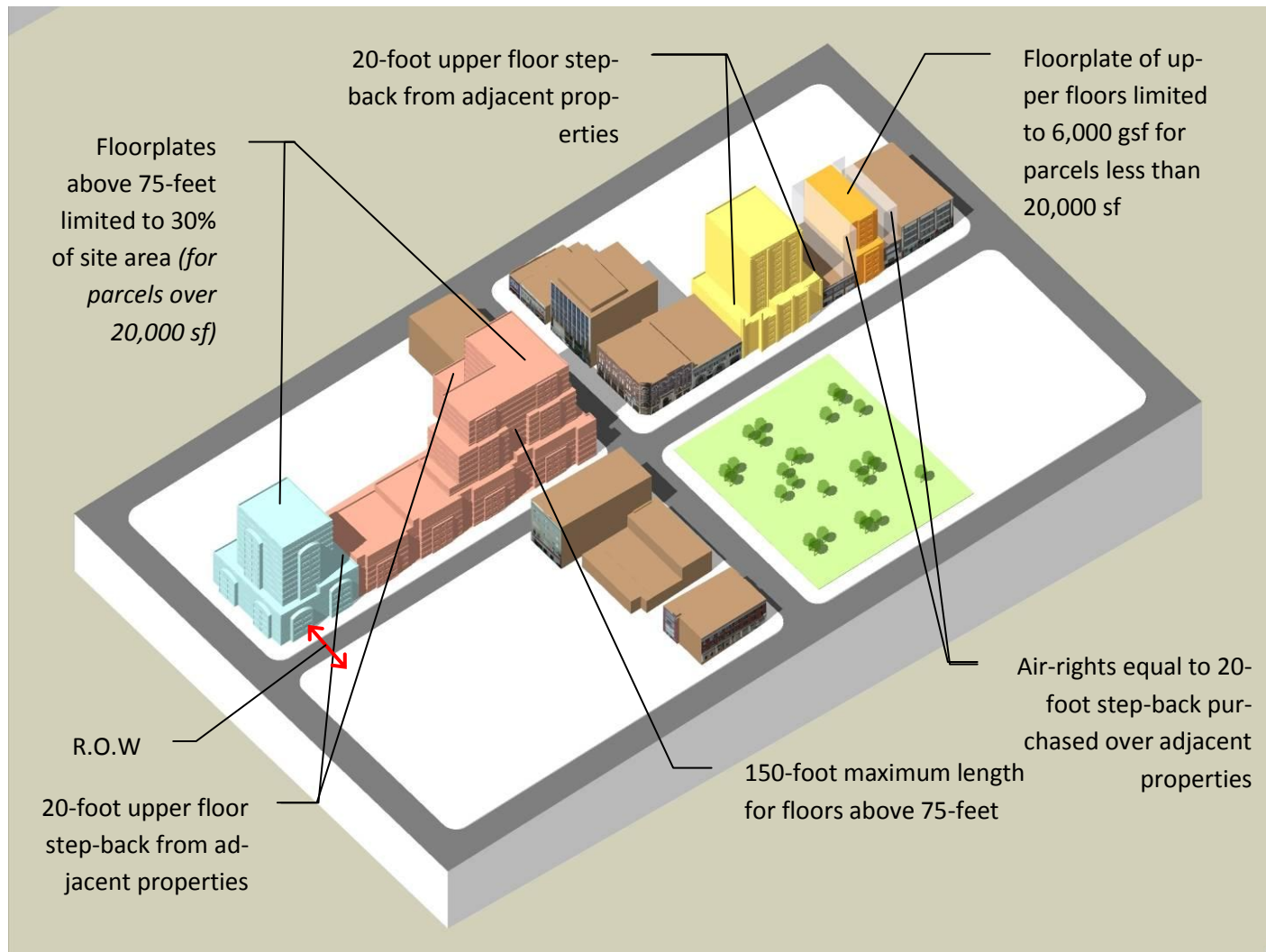


Figure 18 145-foot development height, with the added limitations to building length and overall floorplate size, plus 20-foot step-backs from adjacent properties above the streetwall

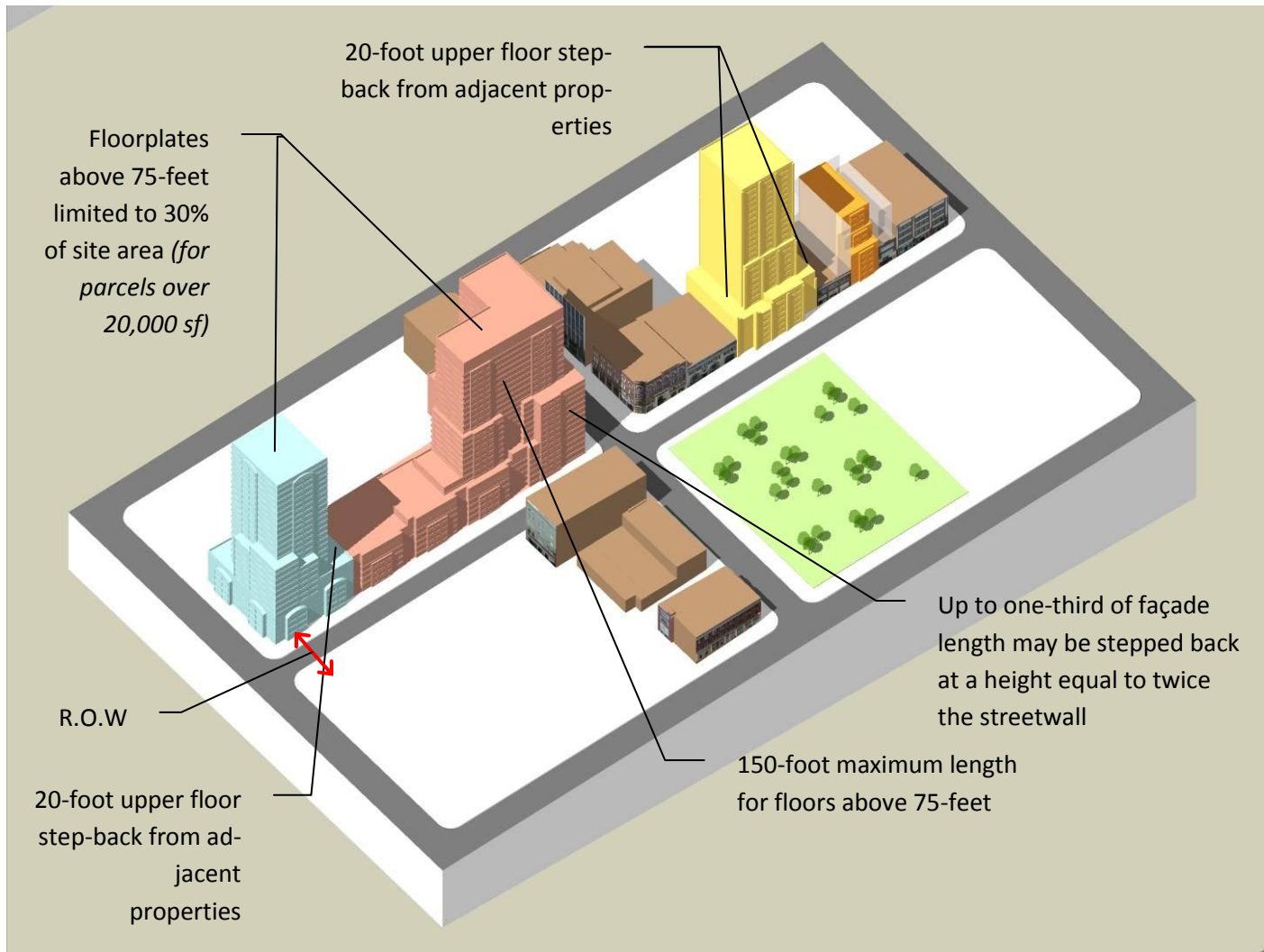


Figure 19 265-foot development height demonstrating build-out Option A for the 48,000 square foot lot

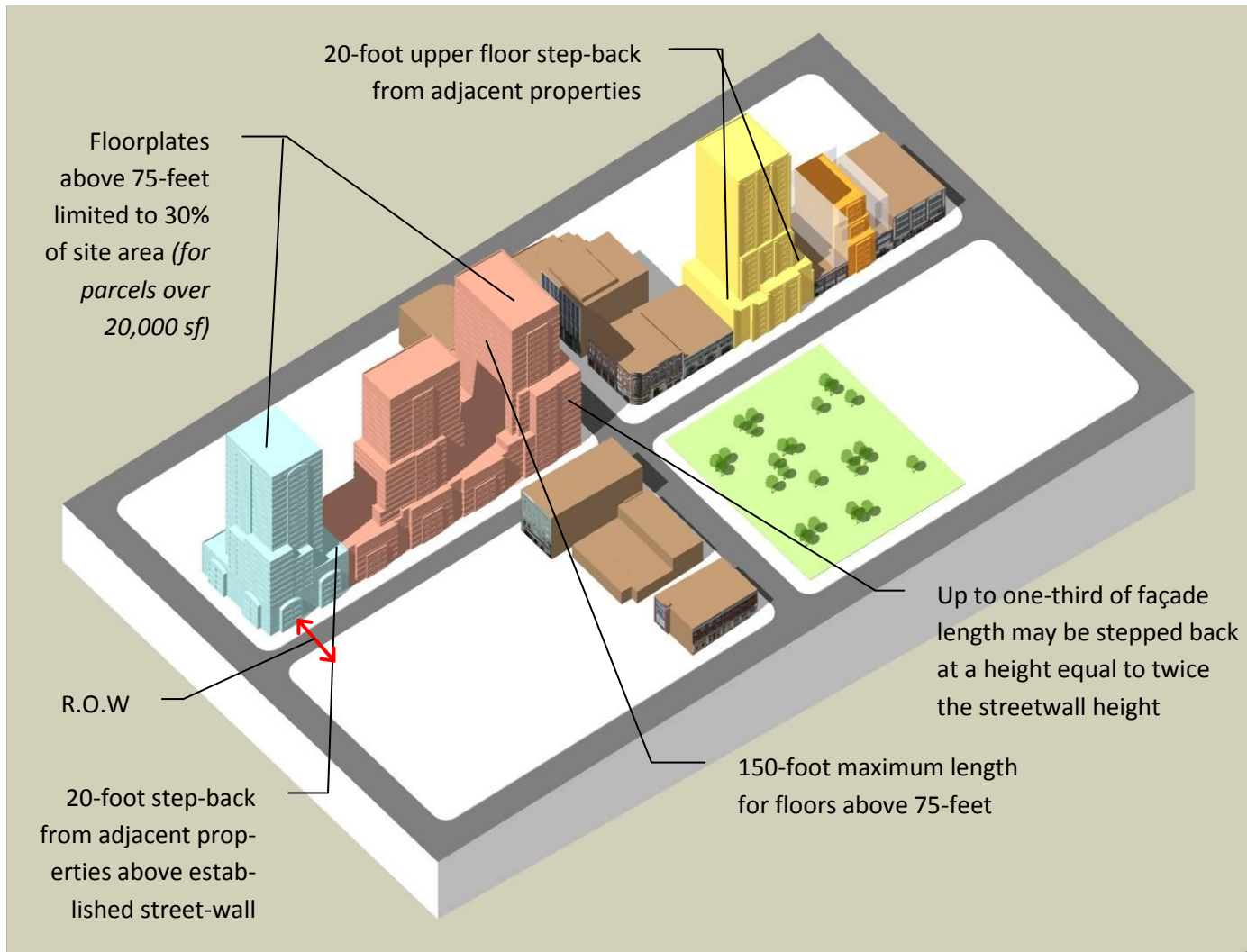
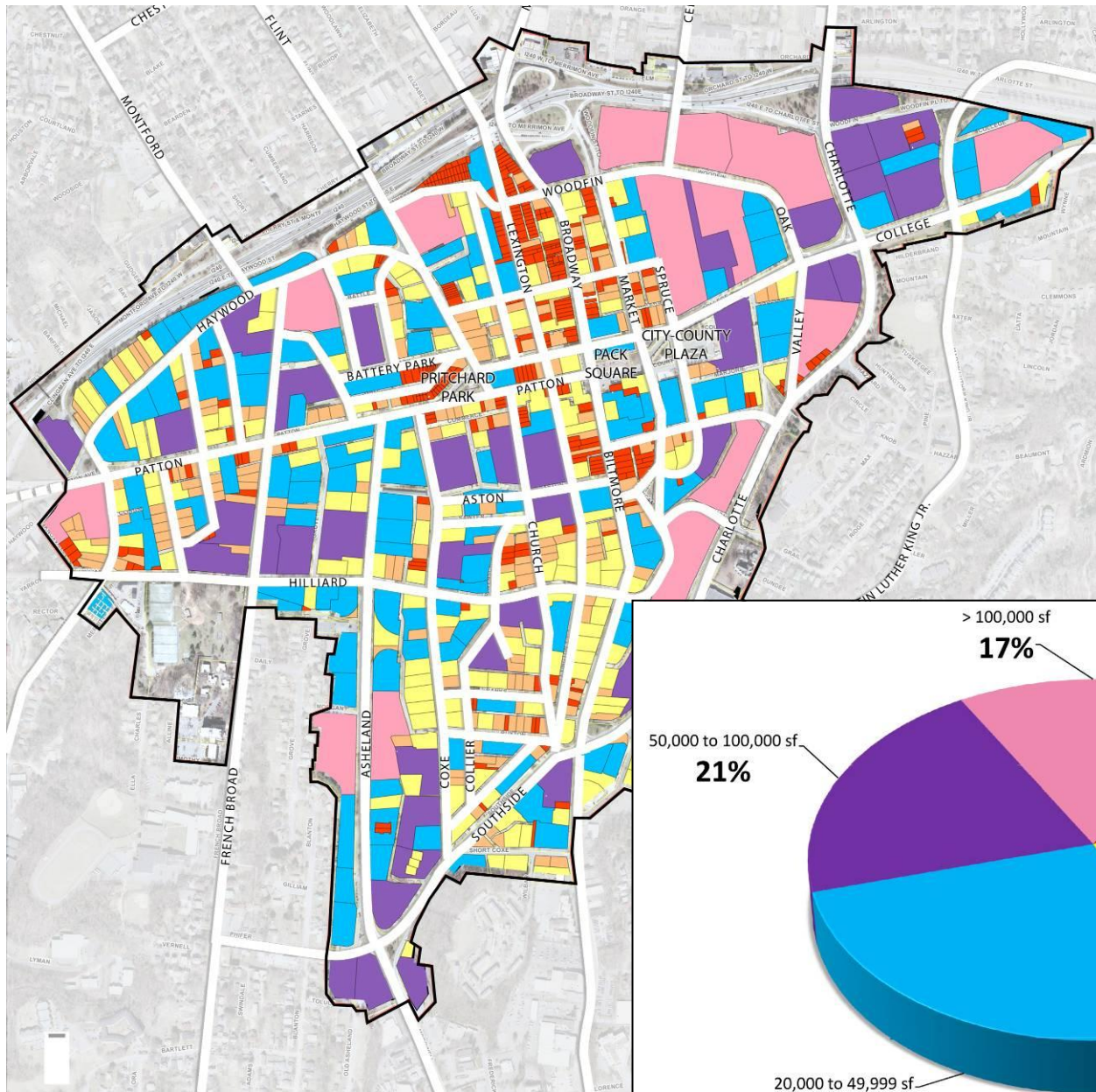
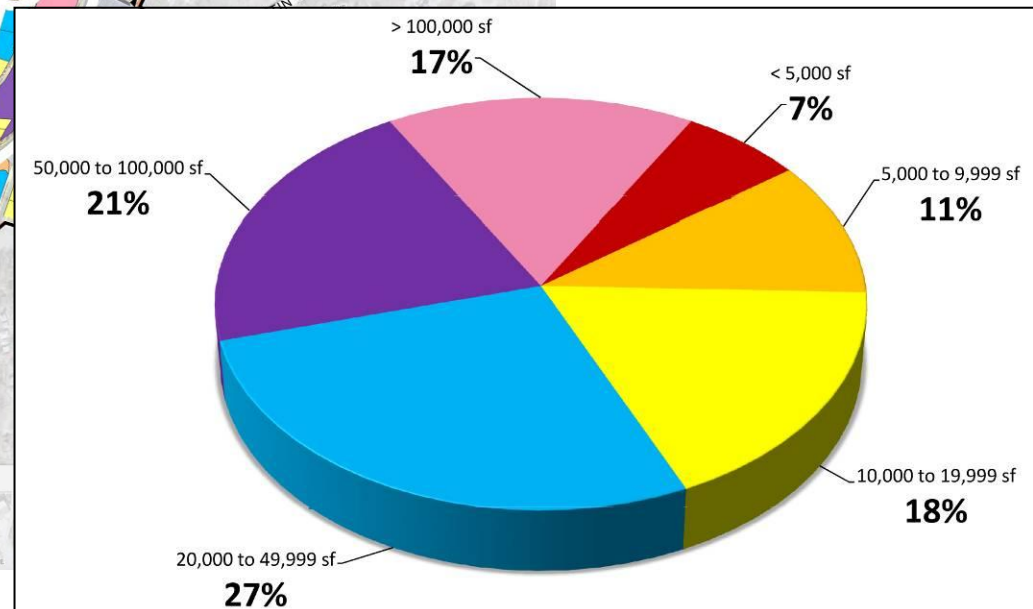


Figure 20 265-foot development height demonstrating build-out Option B for the 48,000 square foot lot



Figures 21,22 Lot size as a percentage of total land area represented by parcels within the study area



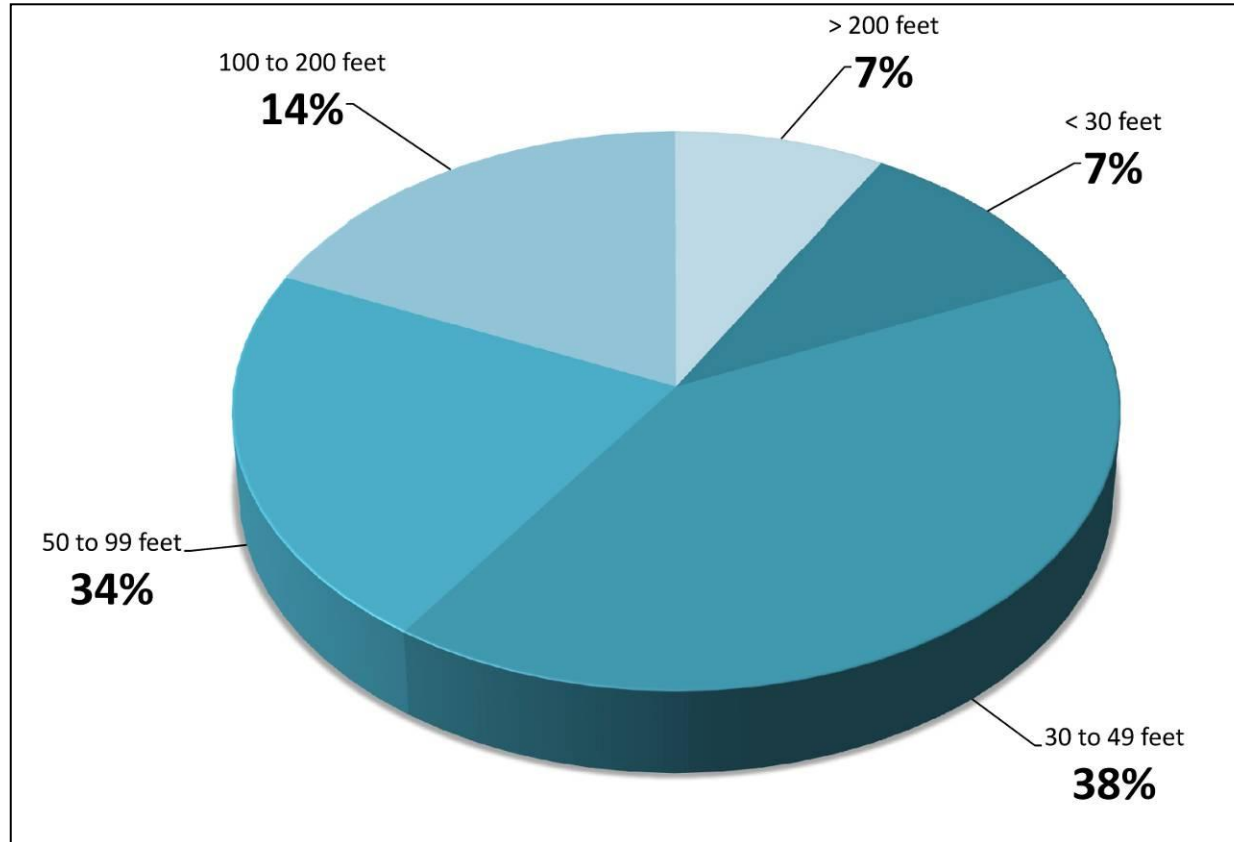


Figure 23 Lot width (street frontage) as a percentage of total parcels within the study area

appendix

Shaping Downtown

5

Update Downtown design guidelines to be current, to be clear, and to promote sustainable development.

CONTENTS

- Detailed recommendations supplementing core strategy elements (Number references correspond to superscript numbers in main strategy text.)
- Suggested format of project review checklist integrating the current Downtown Design Guidelines, UDO and new recommended standards and guidelines, in a concise format clearly differentiating required from recommended measures
 - Height and Massing
 - Façade Relationships
 - Façade Proportions
 - Façade Materials
 - Façade Colors
 - Street Orientation
 - Rehabilitation and Maintenance
- *Figure 1* -- Diagram showing Context Transition Edge Compliance
- *Figures 2-4*-- Diagrams showing front and side setback requirements
- *Figures 5, 6*-- Examples of existing Downtown buildings that meet the Maximum Floorplate requirement.
- *Figures 7-9*-- Examples of existing Downtown buildings that meet the Tall Building Caps requirement
- *Figures 10,11*-- Examples of existing Downtown buildings that meet the Maximum Horizontal Dimension requirement
- *Figures 12-13*-- Examples of existing Downtown buildings that provide the recommended articulation at a variety of scales.
- *Figure 14*—Diagram of the Jackson building, which demonstrates the multiple street frontage exception to the side setback option of the front/side setback requirement.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS SUPPLEMENTING CORE STRATEGY ELEMENTS

(Number references correspond to superscript numbers in main strategy text.)

²⁸ Volume and mass scale intervals should include:

- *Building Bays:* 42-feet to 64-feet, measured horizontally, are a familiar Asheville scale. Bays should extend vertically for at least three-stories. These basic building-block bays relate well to the scale of historic Downtown buildings and our street widths.
- *Primary Bays:* 22-feet to 36-feet, measured horizontally, and at least three-stories vertically are common in Asheville.
- *Secondary Bays:* 10-feet to 16-feet, measured horizontally, and at least one-and-one-half stories vertically relate to the scale of individual residential rooms, most offices, building entrances, and sidewalks.
- *Window Bays:* 3-feet to 6-feet, measured horizontally, and extending vertically at least 1.4 times the horizontal di-

mension. Window bays of this size relate to the scale of typical building windows, doors and projecting bays (as well as the human body).

- *Detail Units:* Architect R.S. Smith used details of variable dimensions, but generally enclosed an area of about one square foot. Detail units relate to the scale of individual building-material units such as bricks, shingles, light fixtures, and vegetation.

²⁹ Within 200-feet of an historic structure, new building façades should specifically make reference to the historic building(s): Bay windows on a new building, for example, might match those on an historic building; tiles or spandrels on a new building might match the size of window divisions on an historic structure.

³⁰ To provide privacy separations between individual ground-floor units and the sidewalk:

- Raise the floor level to between 18- and 48-inches above sidewalk grade.
- On streets where building setbacks are typical, include a compact front yard—at least 2-feet deep and no more than 15-feet deep, preferably matching context—with a fence or plantings defining the yard edge along the sidewalk.

Suggested Project Review Checklist

The following is a suggested format for a project review checklist integrating the current Downtown Design Guidelines, Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and new recommended standards and guidelines, in a concise format clearly differentiating ***required*** from ***recommended*** measures. Chapters equivalent to Chapters 1 and 2 (integrating Chapter 5) of the current Downtown Design Guidelines are used as a sample, but revisions would extend to incorporate the other chapters of the design guidelines and related UDO provisions.

The sections titled Height and Massing, Façade Relationships, Façade Proportions, Façade Materials, Façade Colors, and Street Orientation apply to new construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance projects unless otherwise noted. The last section, titled Rehabilitation and Maintenance, applies only to rehabilitation and maintenance projects, not to new construction.

The judicious addition of photos and diagrams illustrating good examples of design intent is anticipated. Numbers in parentheses indicate text that currently is part of the Downtown Asheville Design Guidelines document, by its sequence number. The letters “UDO” indicate current standards in the Unified Development Ordinance.

Allowable height and massing should be determined through a series of steps as described in the *Height and Massing* section of the checklist on the following pages. These form-based control mechanisms are cumulative. Height should generally be adjusted for a project in the following order: 1) Context Transition Edge; 2) Height Zone; and, 3) Maximum Street Edge Height.

HEIGHT & MASSING

Requirement 1: Context Transition

- **Option One:** The building does not lie within 400-feet of a Context Transition Edge (indicated on the *Height Zone* diagram).
- **Option Two:** The building lies within 400-feet of a Context Transition Edge (indicated on the *Height Zone* diagram) and building walls of any elevation are set back from the Context Transition Edge a distance equal to at least 1.5 times their height. (Regardless of the Context Transition Edge, two-stories of height are allowed where permitted by current zoning. See the *Context Transition* diagram-Figure 1 for further detail.); and either,
 - The site does not abut a residentially zoned property; or,
 - The site abuts a residentially zoned property, and a 15-foot setback from that property is provided.

Requirement 2: Height Zone Compliance

- **Option One:** The building lies within the Tallest Height Zone according to the *Height Zone* diagram, and its overall height is limited to 265-feet.
- **Option Two:** The building lies within the Intermediate Height Zone according to the *Height Zone* diagram, and its overall height is limited to 145-feet.

DETAILS

Allowable height and massing should be determined through a series of steps as described in the requirements in the Height and Massing section of the checklist on this and the following pages. These form-based control mechanisms are cumulative. Height should generally be adjusted for a project in the following order: 1) Context Transition Edge; 2) Height Zone; and, 3) Maximum Street Edge Height.

Building height at any point on a site should be measured to the point on the ground directly below (not to a single reference point per site).

Height should be measured to the highest occupied floor surface.

Requirement 3: Shadow Impacts	○ Shadow impacts on any one point of public open space or on any one point of a historic resource with features or details that are sunlight-dependant and make such resources significant (i.e.: fine stained-glass windows or sculptural ornaments) are limited to no more than two hours between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm on the equinox at ground level. Where no right-of-way exists between the proposed project and the public space, a 50-foot buffer—free of any shadow regulations—may be observed.
Requirement 4: Minimum Street Edge Height	○ Where buildings approach the street, height at the street edge is at least two-stories.*(UDO). <i>*Interior mezzanine floors may be counted as a second floor if they appear as so from the exterior.</i>
Requirement 5: Maximum Street Edge Height	The project reinforces a consistent streetwall using front and/or side setbacks. Streetwall height (height at the street edge) is defined by a height equal to the overall width of that street's right-of-way, unless the building lies within 200-feet of one or more listed historic buildings, in which case streetwall height is limited to within 5-feet of the average façade height of that structure. Building frontages along service streets are exempt from this requirement. (See the <i>Street Hierarchy</i> diagram.) To prevent smaller lots from becoming unbuildable, front or side setbacks should not be required where such setbacks would decrease building area by more than 10%.

Refer to the Build-to Line Requirement under the Street Orientation section of this checklist for related requirements.

Refer to Front and Side Stepback diagrams (Figures 2-4) for further detail.

Since right-of-way widths sometimes vary along a street, the street wall height can vary accordingly. Define streetwall height at any point by the street width at the point.

Note: *The required stepback depth shall be measured from the property line or required façade setback line, if any.*

See Figure 14 for a diagram of the Jackson building, which demonstrates the multiple street frontage exception to the side stepback option of the front/side stepback requirement.

Where the topographic change across a site exceeds 30-feet, the maximum allowed streetwall height may be exceeded on the low side by one-story.

For buildings with multiple street frontages, each façade must meet the stepback requirement above the streetwall accordingly; however, the side stepback option or its equivalent air-rights option may be accommodated through any combination or distribution amongst the building frontages. *(Refer to Figure 14 for clarification.)* At street intersections, the taller streetwall height may wrap around the corner for up to 30-feet of the lesser façade.

One of or any combination (*i.e.: if the front stepback option is applied to 40% of the façade length, the side stepback option should be applied to 60% of side frontage*) of the following options may be used to satisfy this requirement:

- **Option One:** Where buildings meet the right-of-way, at least two-thirds of the façade length observes a front stepback of at least 10-feet above the established streetwall.
- **Option Two:**
 - **Overall building height is 75-feet or less:** Building mass above the established streetwall height observes a cumulative side stepback of 40-feet. The stepback distance may be reached by combining side stepbacks amongst the building sides. (*i.e.: 20-feet at each side, or combined 40-feet on one side and 0-feet on the second side*)*

○ **Overall building height is greater than 75-feet:** Building mass above the established streetwall steps-back from adjacent side property lines a total distance equal to or greater than the length of the proposed building's primary street-front façade that protrudes above the streetwall (or cumulative façade length for buildings facing multiple streets). The stepback distance may be accommodated through any distribution or combination amongst the building sides. (20-feet at each side, or combined 40-feet on one side and 0-feet on the second side)

○ **Option Three:** Development air-rights have been purchased over the adjacent property, covering an area equal to the above stated side step-back, and have been designated as a permanent un-built easement. Building mass above the established streetwall height may be built directly to the property line at adjacent parcels.

Requirement 6:
Floorplate Size

○ **Option One:** For parcels 20,000 square feet and larger, gross floorplate area for floorplates higher than 75-feet from grade is limited to 30% of site area.*

○ **Option Two:** For parcels smaller than 20,000 square feet, gross floorplate area for floorplates higher than 75-feet from grade is 6,000 square feet or less and follows all façade and stepback requirements.

**Exception: For building volumes above 75-feet on sites*

Refer to Figures 5 and 6 for examples of existing Downtown buildings that form the basis for this requirement.

	<p><i>12,000 square feet or larger, buildings with floorplate areas of up to 50% of the site area may be approved by the City Council if surrounded by substantial permanent public or private open space that allows for views and access to direct sunlight.</i></p>
<p>Requirement 7: Maximum Horizontal Dimension</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For floors above the 75-foot height threshold, the maximum horizontal dimension in any direction is limited to 145-feet for the first floor above the 75-foot height threshold.* * based on the dimension of the longest façade of the Flatiron building
<p>Requirement 8: External Vista Points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The proposed project exceeds the 75-foot height threshold and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Photomontages have been provided from <i>external vista points</i> as designated by the Downtown Commission, illustrating their proposed building's presence in the skyline. See View Corridors diagrams for clarification or vista point locations. ○ Where possible, building mass is oriented to preserve view corridors and roof forms help to frame views (37).
<p>Requirement 9: Public View Corridors/Internal Vista Points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The proposed project lies within one or more of the established <i>public view corridors</i> as specified by the Downtown Commission and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For any <i>public view corridors</i> that the

Refer to Figures 10 and 11 for examples of existing Downtown buildings that form the basis for this requirement.

See the View Corridors diagrams for exact locations of public view corridor and vista points.

project lies within, photomontages have been provided from the corresponding *internal vista points* as designated by the Downtown Commission, illustrating their proposed building's presence in the skyline. See View Corridors diagrams for clarification or vista point locations.

- Where possible, building mass is oriented to preserve view corridors and roof forms help to frame views (37).

Requirement 10:
Building Caps

- Forms that provide a cap to the building are used* and they:
 - help define the building's character and scale from the street;
 - use slender building proportions that preserve and/or frame views—no broad slabs block major portions of any views;
 - are designed as attractive landmarks with special forms and materials;
 - are coordinated with building form to distinguish a base middle and top; and,
 - express a character uniquely appropriate to Downtown Asheville; and,
 - enhance the overall skyline of Downtown Asheville.

**On flat roofs, a cornice or other decorative band acts as a "cap" to the façade. (37)*

Refer to Figures 7, 8 and 9 for examples of existing Downtown buildings that comply with this requirement.

Recommendation 1

- Taller portions of buildings, and the increased streetwall exception (as described in the Maximum Street Edge Height requirement), are located near prominent street intersections and/or provide visual accent or frame views (20).

See the View Corridors diagram for recommended locations to frame views with taller buildings.

FAÇADE RELATIONSHIPS

Recommendation 1 ○ Where buildings heights deviate greatly from the norm, a general perceived similarity in building heights is maintained at ground level through the use of materials, detailing, color, reinforced horizontal lines etc. Cornices, upper story windows and storefront windows are aligned, especially if the new building will abut one of the historic structures in the district (23). In a context where established buildings are of similar heights, façade features that may align, such as moldings, cornices, and window sills, do so (19). Storefront heights are aligned with others on the block (23), especially throughout the Core Area (21).

Recommendation 2 ○ Traditional façade components are incorporated in new designs, especially when they abut historic structures (33). (See the description of typical “Main Street” building fronts in the Introduction) (33).

- parapet cap or cornice
- sign band above the storefront
- awning or canopy
- transom
- recessed entry
- kick plate as a base to the storefront.

DETAILS

Gradual height transitions between buildings prevent taller new buildings from feeling out of scale and character. Buildings of unequal height are brought into relationship through use of horizontal definition lines – for instance, providing a horizontal line on the taller building that clearly aligns with a cornice on the lower building.

FAÇADE PROPORTIONS

- Recommendation 1** ○ The distinction between upper and lower floors is maintained, especially if the building is mixed-use, is in a context with mixed-use buildings, or is along active or active-gateway streets (32). See the Street Hierarchy diagram for clarification of street types.
- Recommendation 2** ○ Appropriate façade width rhythm is maintained in the widths of new buildings for a single lot, as well as for those that cover over more than one lot (24).
- Recommendation 3** Building form is articulated at a range of intervals that relate to the smaller scales of surrounding buildings, trees, people and other elements, especially for larger buildings set in smaller contexts.
- New buildings are composed of elements at a range of horizontal and vertical scale intervals including, at a minimum, the following five:
- Building Bays, 42- to 64-feet in horizontal length (or other dimension best matching context) and extending vertically at least three stories.
 - Primary Bays, 22- to 36-feet in horizontal length and extending vertically at least three stories.
 - Secondary Bays, 10- to 16-feet in horizontal length and extending vertically at least one and one-half story.
 - Window Bays, 3- to 6-feet in horizontal length

DETAILS

The difference between ground and upper floors should be expressed in the proportions of storefront windows to upper story windows. The first floor should primarily be transparent, whereas the upper floor is traditionally more solid with smaller openings (32).

Refer to Figures 12 and 13 for examples of existing Downtown buildings that comply with this recommendation.

Larger buildings fit much better into smaller contexts when their volumes are broken up into a hierarchy of smaller volumes and scales that relate to the smaller scales of other buildings, trees, people and other elements.

Building bays relate to the scale of typical residential building sections and overall street widths.

Primary bays relate to the scale of whole apartments in adjacent dwellings, street trees and street pavement widths.

Secondary bays relate to the scale of individual residential rooms, building entrances and sidewalk widths. (Architectural trim or a change in

and extending vertically at least 1.4 times horizontal length.

- Detail Units, of variable dimensions, but enclosing an area of approximately one square foot.

Recommendation 4

- Where there is one or more listed historic building within 200-feet of the new building façade, the new building uses scale intervals that specifically reference those of the listed buildings.

building materials is used to create a sense of the façade modules that are typical)

Window bays relate to the scale of typical building windows, doors, projecting bays and the human body.

Detail units relate to the scale of individual building-material units such as bricks and shingles, as well as light fixtures, vegetation, and elements of the human body.

Example of new building integrating the scale of an historic structure: a bay window on a new building might be made to match the width of one on an historic building, and exterior tiles or spandrels on a new building might be made to match the size of window divisions on an historic building.

FAÇADE MATERIALS

Requirement 1: Historic Materials

- New buildings within 200-feet of one or more existing historic structure(s) incorporate materials of like material, size, shape, color or other intrinsic characteristic to prominent materials on the historic structure(s).

Requirement 2: Side Façade Glazing

- Side facades above the 75-foot height threshold are composed of at least 25% glazing.

Recommendation 1

- Building materials are combined in modules that can be visually measured to gain a sense of scale (25). Familiar building components are used in traditional size. See also Façade Proportions.

Recommendation 2

- Traditional materials are used in new buildings (26), but do not directly copy the use or appearance of historic materials; rather, are reinterpreted and used appropriately as part of a contemporary composition.

DETAILS

Using materials that resemble those in nearby historic buildings helps impart a sense of continuity in the Downtown environment and across eras. However, designers of new buildings are advised not to directly copy the use or appearance of historic materials; rather, historic materials should be reinterpreted and used appropriately as part of a contemporary composition.

Recommendation 3 ○ Non-traditional urban materials (such as unpainted rough-sawn wood, uncut stone, and corrugated metal siding, and materials with a rustic image) are used carefully and in ways that relate to their traditional context (27, 28).

Recommendation 4 ○ Brick, terra cotta, cut stone, or other materials that have matte finishes and muted colors similar to brick and stone are used for large surfaces (26).

Highly reflective surfaces that will generate glare are avoided, especially at ground level. Where concrete walls or synthetic building “skins” are used, they are designed in muted finishes, and the surfaces are articulated in modules or subdivisions that help convey a sense of scale for the façade (27).

FAÇADE COLORS

- Recommendation 1** ○ For rehabilitation and maintenance projects, façade colors have been reviewed with staff during a technical consultation (52)
- Recommendation 2** ○ For new construction, color schemes that complement other buildings are used, and are “mixed and matched” from several buildings, not copied from one building entirely (52).
- Recommendation 3** ○ For new construction, color is used to coordinate façade elements in an overall composition (53).
- Recommendation 4** ○ For new construction, base colors are muted earth tones or darker muted pastels (53). Bright colors are reserved for accents only (54).
- Recommendation 5** ○ For new construction, only one base color is used for the majority of the background wall surface (53).
- Recommendation 6** ○ For new construction, trim colors do not contrast too strongly with base colors (53).
- Recommendation 7** ○ For new construction, rehab, and maintenance projects, brick is left unpainted, especially for historic buildings (57).

DETAILS

Other colors from the block are coordinated in the scheme to help tie the project in with others on the block. (52).

Accent colors are used for signs, awnings, and entrance doors (54).

If the brick is already painted, paint removal schemes that damage the finish with abrasive methods are avoided, (sandblasting for example will damage the finish and accelerate erosion) (57).

STREET ORIENTATION

Requirement 1: Build-to Line

- **Option One:** A zero-foot setback from the right of way line is observed. (UDO)
- **Option Two:** A publicly accessible courtyard or plaza space is provided in the setback area. (UDO)
- **Option Three:** An adopted plan or other official document of the city recommends a greater setback. (UDO)
- **Option Four:** The building lies along a street where existing buildings do not typically meet the sidewalk and the typical setback has been observed (matching context conditions as closely as possible).

Requirement 2: Pedestrian Street Fa- cades

- If the project lies along any Key Pedestrian streets, at least 70% of the street level façade of non-residential uses is composed of transparent glass or other treatments of visual interest.

Requirement 3: Downtown Street Fa- cades

- If the building lies along any Downtown streets other than Key Pedestrian streets, at least 50% of the street level façade of non-residential uses is composed of transparent glass or other treatments of visual interest (29; UDO).

DETAILS

(See the *Street Hierarchy* diagram for clarification of street types.)

See the *Street Hierarchy* diagram for clarification of street types.

Requirement 4: Street-level Facades	○ At street-level, areas of opaque wall extend no more than 20-feet horizontally before a window, door or other transparent relief (UDO).	
Recommendation 1	○ Street level facades of residential buildings are composed of at least 30% (40% for live/work units) transparent glass or other treatments of visual interest.	
Recommendation 2	○ Along Gateway Corridor, Primary, and Secondary streets, the first-story of any parking structure is masked by a habitable liner building and the decks above are be screened from view by a designed facade consistent with the overall building design. (UDO)	See the <i>Street Hierarchy</i> diagram for clarification of street types.
Recommendation 3	○ Along Gateway Corridor, Primary, and Secondary streets, surface parking lots are masked from the street by a habitable building.	See the <i>Street Hierarchy</i> diagram for clarification of street types.
Recommendation 4	○ Where possible, main building entrances are located along Gateway Corridor and Primary streets, while service entrances are located along Service Streets. In the event that a development fronts multiple streets, the service entrance should be located along the less prominent street and should be screened to the extent possible.	See the <i>Street Hierarchy</i> diagram for clarification of street types.

- Recommendation 5** ○ Exterior entrances for individual ground-floor units (and access to units on upper floors through other entries) are provided; or a prominent main lobby, highly visible to pedestrians, and associated landscaping that contributes to street character have been provided.
- Recommendation 6** ○ Ground floors containing dwelling units (other than live-work units) have a privacy separation from the sidewalk, which is accomplished by raising the floor level of ground floor units at least 18-inches, and no more than 48-inches, above sidewalk grade at windows or doors.
- Recommendation 7** ○ On streets where existing buildings do not typically meet the sidewalk, a compact front yard of 2- to 15-feet (matching context conditions as closely as possible) is provided for ground floors containing dwelling units (other than live-work units) instead of or in addition to the raised floor level to enhance privacy and contribute to the street environment.
- Recommendation 8** ○ A fence, wall or shrub plantings at least 2-feet tall defines any yard edge (where it occurs) along the sidewalk.
- Recommendation 9** ○ Large expanses of featureless wall surface at the street level are avoided, especially where they might discourage pedestrian activity in the Core Area. Storefronts, decorative surfaces or other features are used to provide visual interest to pedestrians (29).

In residential buildings, individual entrances to ground level units lend a level of scale and identity that reinforces the individual dwelling unit, breaking down the scale of the larger building. Some variation from these standards may be appropriate on sloped sites.

Recommendation 10 ○ Where it is provided, storefront glass is shaded by appropriate means in order to allow good visibility into store-front windows and to create pedestrian interest. Awnings, canopies, or arcades with storefront glass recessed are used to make the environment more appealing for pedestrians and to improve the visibility into stores (31).

Recommendation 11 ○ Entrances to stores are provided at grade. Stairs are not used to enter shops. Wherever possible direct access from a public sidewalk is provided to all retail shops, without the need to enter internal lobbies (30).

Design of awnings and clerestory windows should also address passive solar shading opportunities.

REHABILITATION AND MAINTENANCE

Requirement 1: Historic Building Re- view

- **Option One:** The project is not designated as an historic property by the Asheville City Council.
- **Option One:** The project is designated as an historic property by the Asheville City Council and has been reviewed by the Historic Resources Commission (18).

Recommendation 1

- The essential original design characteristics of the building have been respected (1).

Recommendation 2

- The basic material characteristics of the building have been maintained, uncovered, or replaced with a similar material (2).

DETAILS

All rehabilitation and maintenance buildings should be analyzed to determine which elements are essential to their character. Some may have historic ornament and decoration intact. Many others will retain the original building materials and proportions of openings. Theme designs that do not reflect the original character of the building should be avoided. The character established within the block should also be respected (1).

Original sizes, shapes and locations of storefronts, recessed entries, kick plates, transoms, upper story windows, roof forms, façade ornamentation, and details should be maintained (3-12).

Recommendation 3 ○ Building fronts that are plain, lacking in historic significance and architectural detail have been developed with a new facade that reinforces general characteristics of other buildings on the block and incorporates the traditional elements described above and in Façade Colors, Façade Materials, and Façade Proportions (13, 14)

Recommendation 4 ○ Rear entrance(s) for shared public and service access have been developed where feasible (15-17).

Materials and colors that coordinate with the main façade should be used for easy recognition that both entrances are related to the same building or business. A smaller version of the main sign should be used to identify this entrance (15-17).

CONTEXT TRANSITION

building walls of any elevation shall be set back from the Context Transition Edge (indicated on the Height Zone map) a distance equal to at least 1.5 times their height.

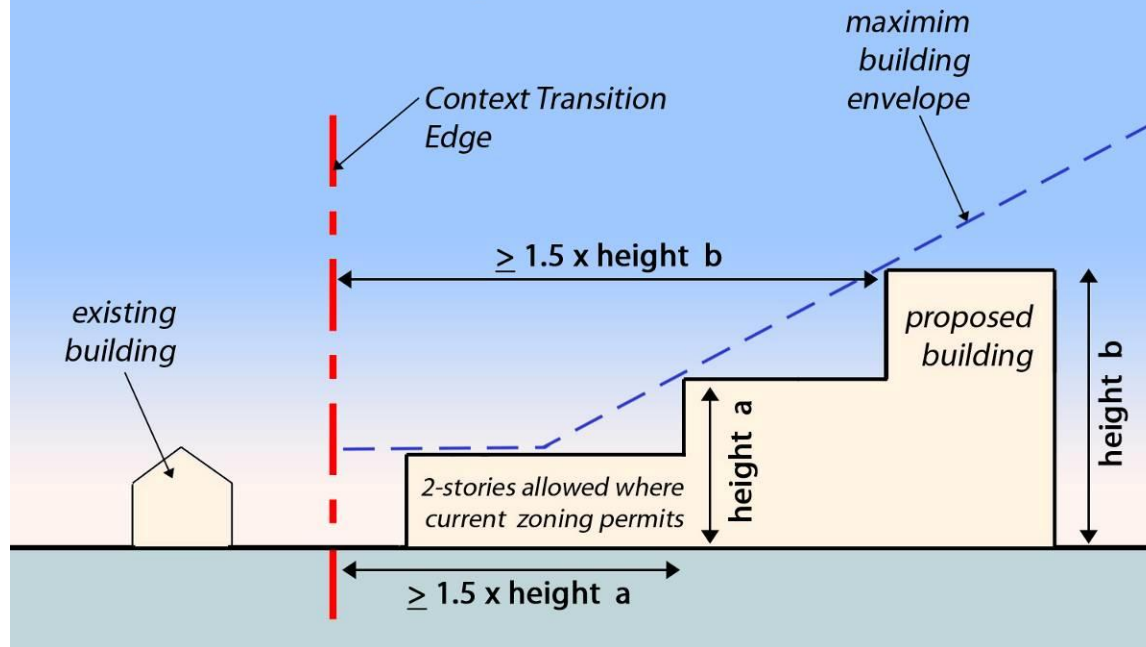
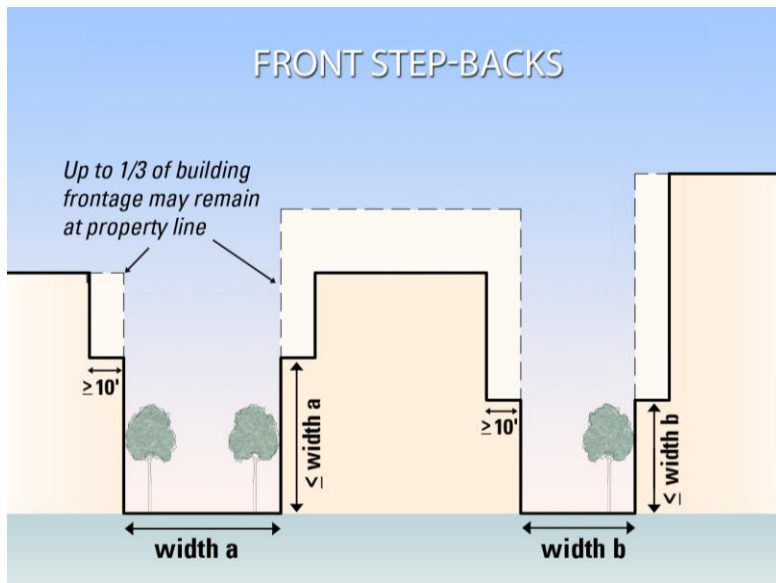
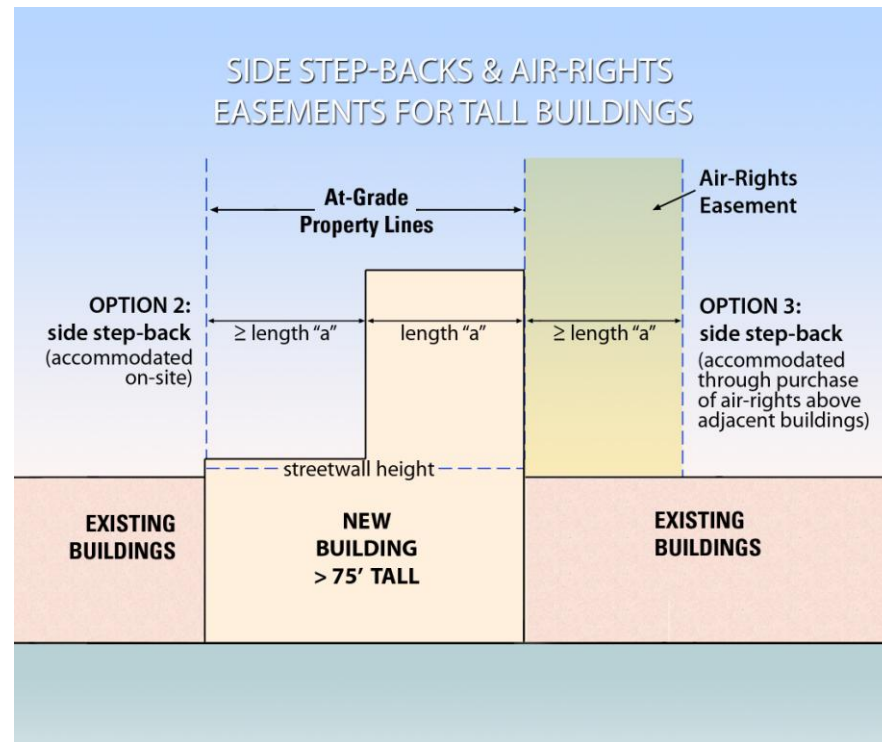
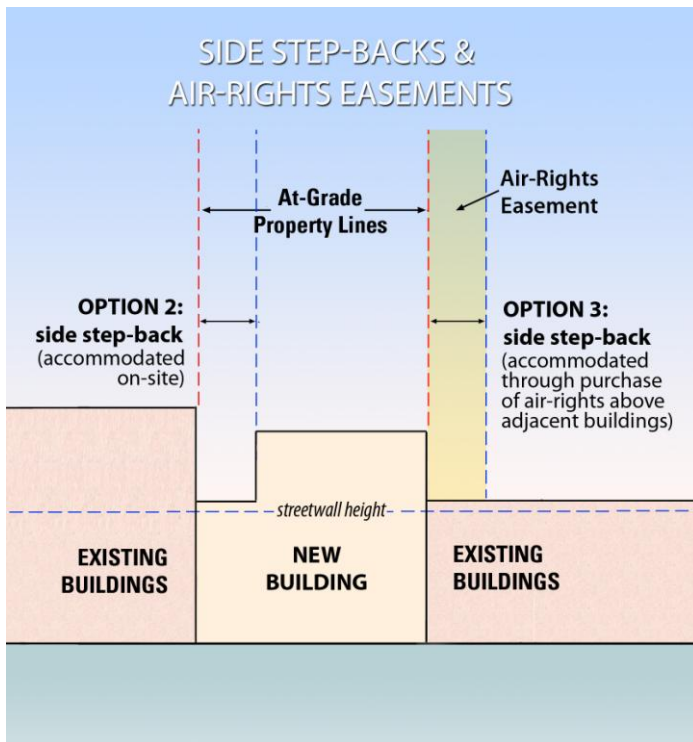


Figure 1 The Context Transition Requirement of the *Height and Massing* section is intended to create appropriate height transitions between downtown buildings and the surrounding neighborhoods.



Figures 2-4 The Maximum Street Edge Requirement of the *Height and Massing* section (Front /Side Stepbacks), is intended to accomplish several goals:

- Introduce clear view corridors between building volumes
- Accommodate reasonable levels of privacy and daylight between buildings
- Accommodate reasonable amounts of direct sunlight to all private rooftops and to public parks
- Avoid abrupt height changes between downtown buildings and to the surrounding neighborhoods



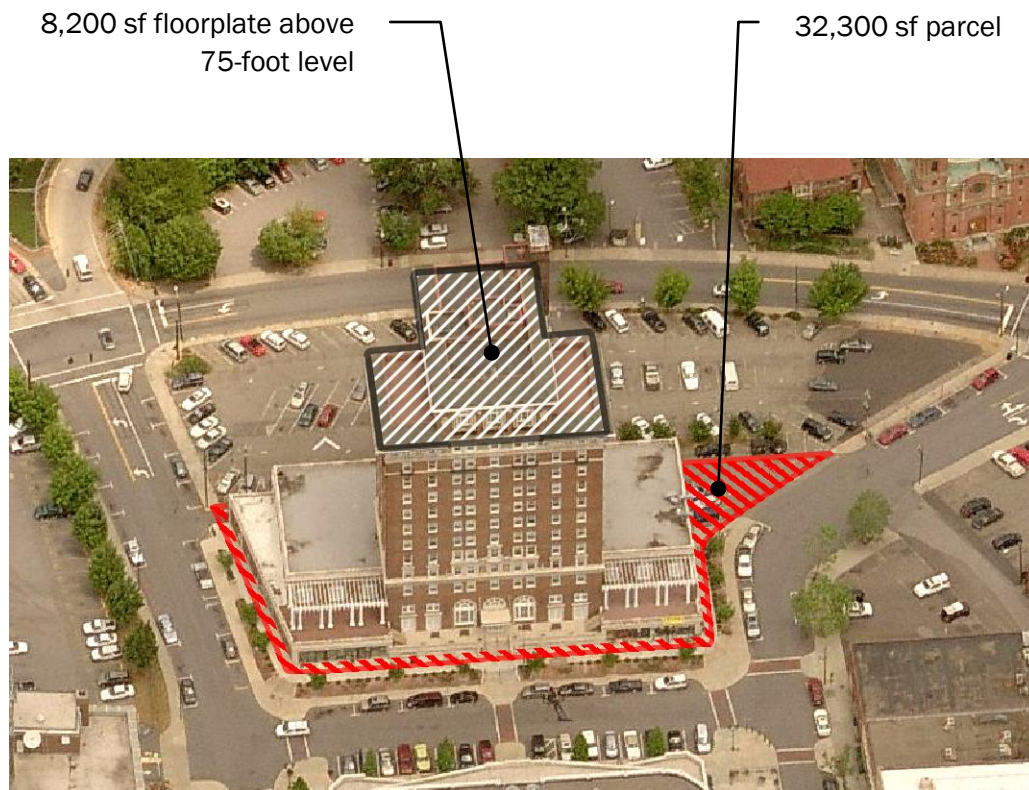


Figure 5 The Battery Park Hotel building complies with Option One of the Floorplate Size Requirement in the *Height and Massing* section (for parcels 20,000 square feet and larger). Approximate 32,300 sf parcel, approximate 8,200 sf floorplate above 75-foot level (25% of parcel size)

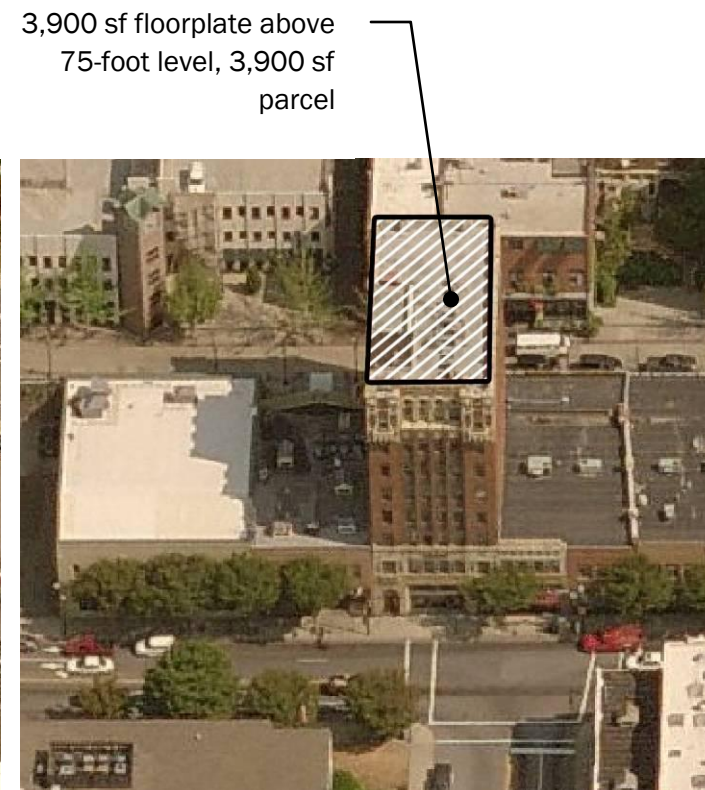


Figure 6 The Public Service building complies with Option Two of the Floorplate Size Requirement in the *Height and Massing* section (for parcels smaller than 20,000 square feet). Approximate 3,900 sf parcel, approximate 3,900 sf floorplate above 75-foot level (less than maximum 6,000 sf allowance)



Figures 7-9 The Jackson building, City Hall, and the proposed Ellington building comply with the Building Caps Requirement of the *Height and Massing* section. Building caps that have impact on the skyline should demonstrate special architectural attention due to their visual prominence.



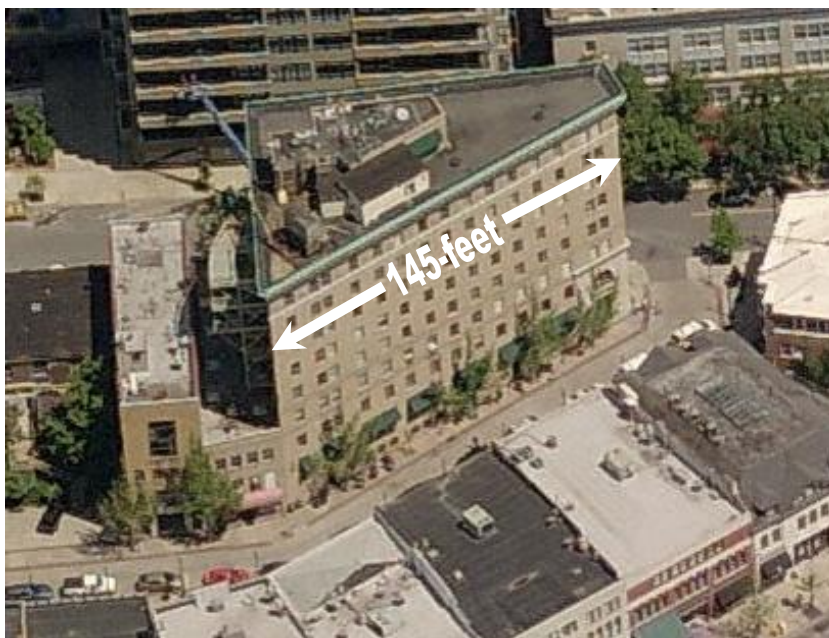
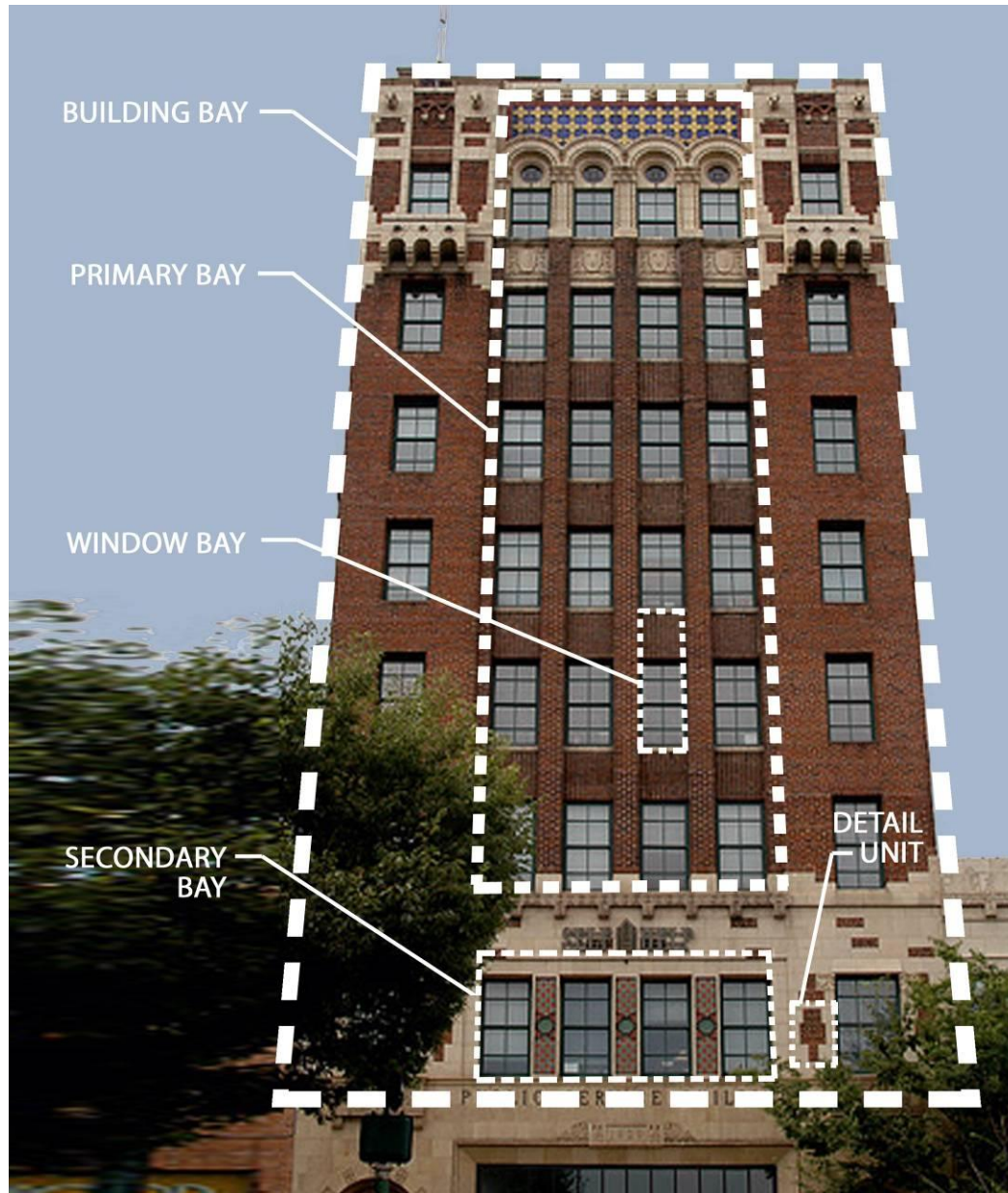


Figure 10 The Flatiron building complies with the Maximum Horizontal Dimension Requirement of the *Height and Massing* section. Approximately 145-feet along longest horizontal dimension.



Figures 12, 13 The Public Service and Kress buildings provide the recommended articulation at a variety of scales (Façade Proportions Recommendation 3). Buildings should contain expressive elements at a range of scales to help make larger and smaller building volumes, people, trees and other major physical parts of downtown fit comfortably together. These diagrams demonstrate how a range of scale intervals can be articulated on buildings of various sizes, styles and uses.

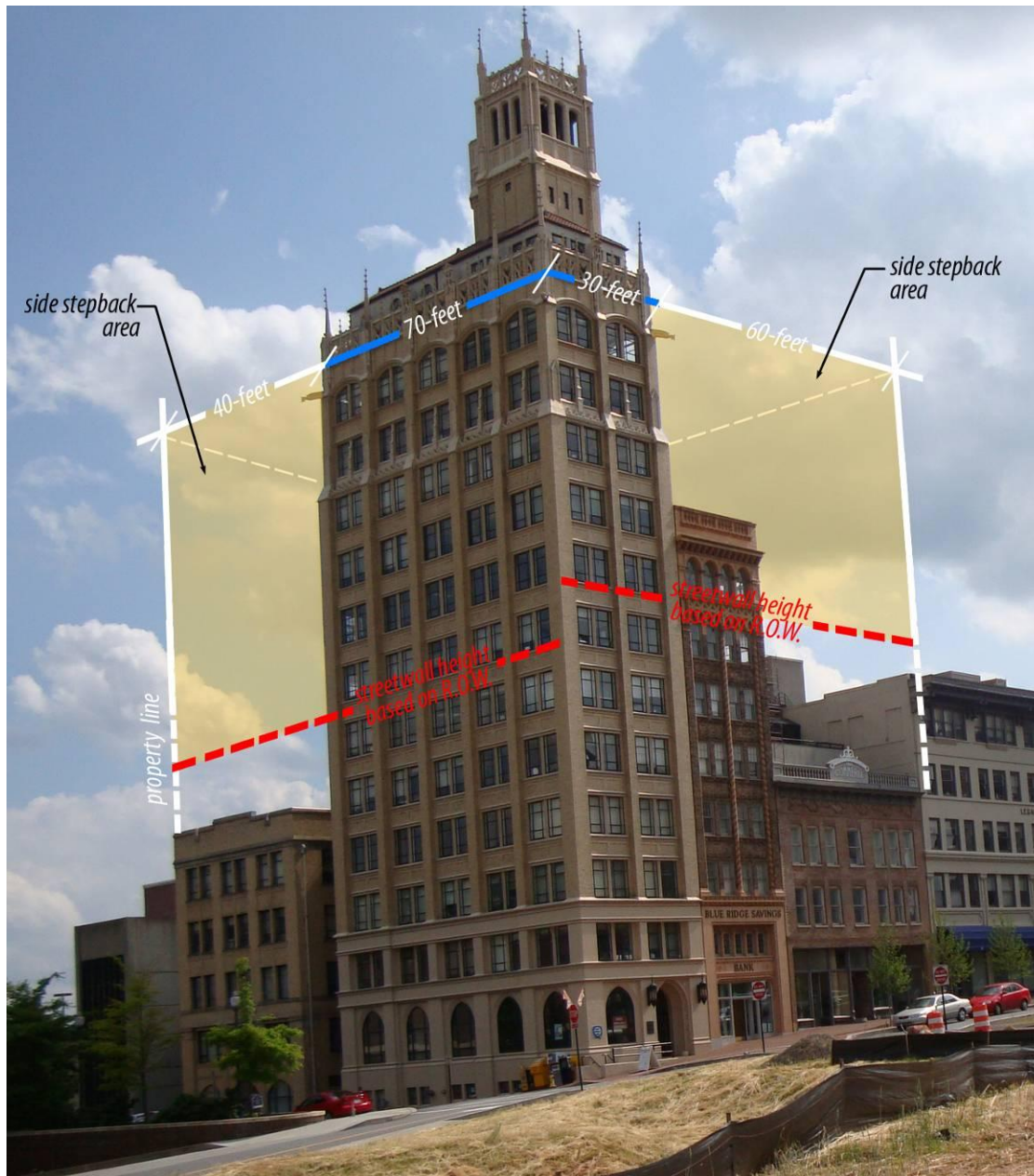


Figure 14 In the event that a development fronts multiple streets, the side stepback option or its equivalent air-rights option may be accommodated through any combination or distribution amongst the building sides.

For example, the Jackson building fronts two public streets. If built new today, it would comply with the side step-back option requirement (side stepbacks equivalent to a length of the façade that protrudes above the 75-foot level) by distributing these step-backs among the two streets.

Of the facades that abut public streets and protrude above the 75-foot level, their measurements are approximately 30-feet along S. Pack Square, and 70-feet along Market Street. Since the development fronts more than one public street, these two façade lengths can be added together, to total 100-feet, and a side stepback equal to 100-feet must be provided above the 75-foot level, in any distribution, amongst the two sides. A side stepback of approximately 40-feet has been provided above the 75-foot level along Market Street. A side stepback of approximately 60-feet has been provided above the 75-foot level along S. Pack Square. Combined, the side stepbacks total 100-feet, equivalent to combined façade width.

appendix

Shaping Downtown

6

Make Downtown project review transparent, predictable, and inclusive of community input.

CONTENTS

- Detailed recommendations supplementing core strategy elements (Number references correspond to superscript numbers in main strategy text.)
- Background on Existing Process, Challenges and Opportunities
- Diagram of Public Concerns about the Existing Process
- Diagram of Proposed Review Process Structure
- Diagram of Review Processes for Downtown Projects in Other North Carolina Jurisdictions
- Variances or Special Exceptions
- Alternative Review Processes

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS SUPPLEMENTING CORE STRATEGY ELEMENTS

(Number references correspond to superscript numbers in main strategy text.)

³¹ Projects over 50,000 square feet should be considered as significant Level II projects.

³² Projects less than 50,000 square feet should be considered as less significant Level II projects.

³³ Mailings should be expanded to owners within 500-feet, up from the current 200-feet.

³⁴ The Intermediate Height Zone threshold is 145-feet (up to 15-stories) in height.

BACKGROUND ON EXISTING PROCESS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Asheville's current review process for Downtown projects has been characterized by citizens, developers, property owners, City staff members, and elected officials alike as difficult to understand, cumbersome, and frustrating. Unlike other jurisdictions in North Carolina, the City requires four levels of review for large Downtown projects, and much discontent about Downtown development has crystallized around this lengthy and complicated process. As a new generation of development emerges in Downtown Asheville, how can the City create a more efficient and transparent review process to ensure that project approval decisions are made in rational, easily-understood ways that respect the rights of all interested parties?

Existing Process

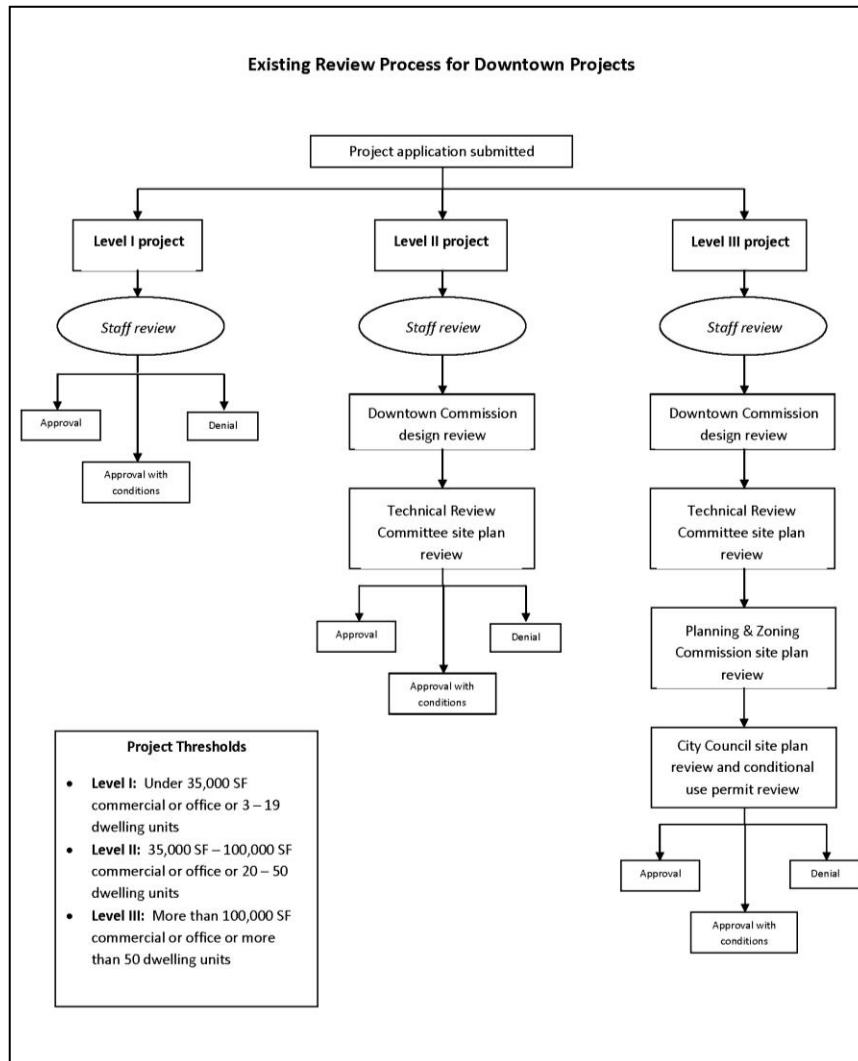
Asheville's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) currently divides development proposals into three different categories*:

- **Level I:** Under 35,000 SF commercial or office or 3 – 19 dwelling units
- **Level II:** 35,000 SF – 100,000 SF commercial or office or 20 – 50 dwelling units
- **Level III:** More than 100,000 SF commercial or office or more than 50 dwelling units

* Each of the following categories contains additional thresholds for manufactured housing, residential subdivisions, and additions/expansions.

Each category receives a different level of site plan review, with Level I projects being reviewed administratively only, Level II projects being reviewed by the Technical Review Committee (TRC), and Level III projects being reviewed by the Technical Review Committee, the Planning & Zoning Commission, and the City Council (see Existing Review Process flow chart on the following page). Additional requirements apply to projects located in the Downtown Design Review Overlay District: these projects must undergo design review by the Downtown Commission to ensure that they meet design guidelines formulated especially for the Downtown area. This design review is advisory only; applicants choose whether they wish to comply with the Downtown Commission's design recommendations.

The site plan review and design review processes are complicated by an additional requirement for Level III projects. These larger projects must undergo review for a conditional use permit, which allows the City Council to place restrictions on a project to ensure its compatibility with adjacent uses. The conditional use permit process is conducted under a different legal standard of review (quasi-judicial) than site plan review (legislative) and does not allow Council members to consider any information about the development project beyond what is presented at the conditional use permit public hearing. The conditional use permit hearing, in essence, allows City Council members to conduct review of a project anew, as if earlier reviews conducted by the Downtown Commission, TRC, and Planning & Zoning Commission had not occurred.



Public Concerns about the Existing Process

Public Input. During the Downtown Master Plan public process, many comments were made about the timing of public input in the project review process. Asheville’s UDO only *recommends* that developers of Level III projects hold a meeting with the affected neighborhood during the project approval process. Although public hearings are associated with each level of review, some citizens feel that they do not learn about projects early enough to provide meaningful comments at public hearings, especially for Level II projects. See diagram of public input opportunities for recommended review process on following page.

Need for Early Impact on Design/Greater Control over Design. Many Downtown Master Plan public meeting attendees repeatedly expressed frustration that the Downtown Commission’s design review is advisory only. Citizens would like to see a process that places a greater emphasis on conforming to design guidelines and standards.

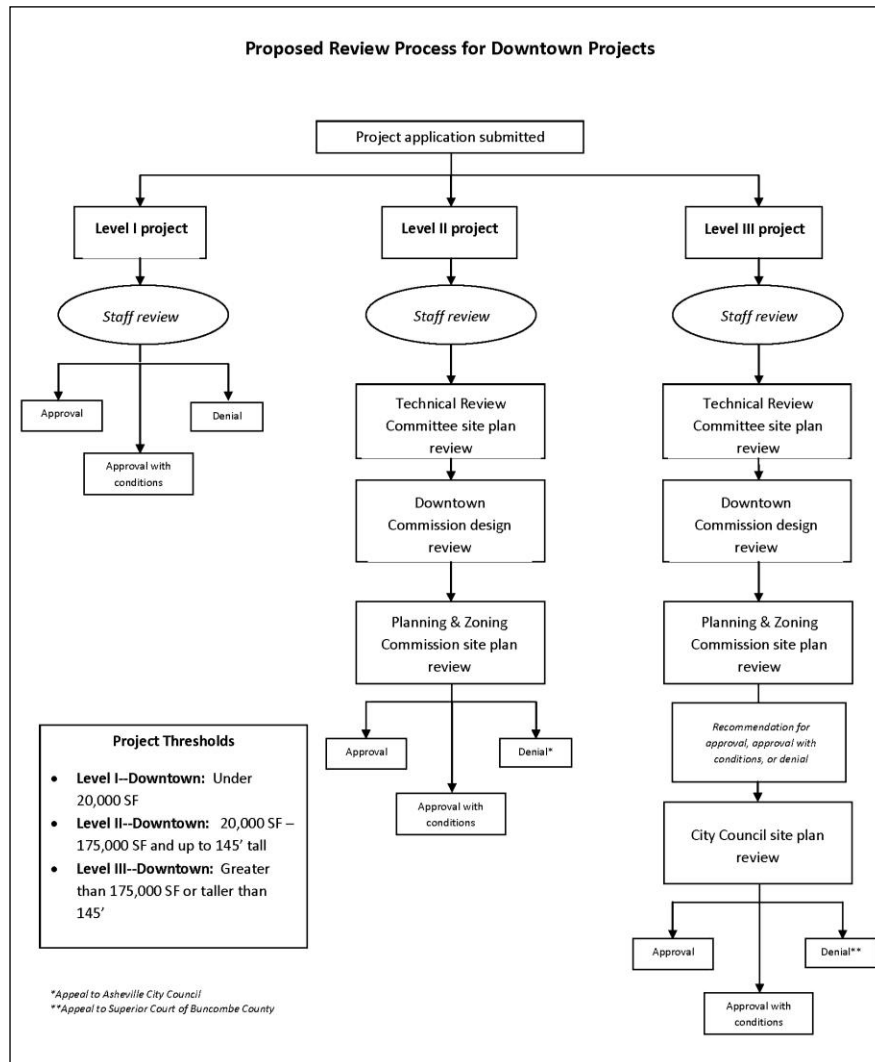
Conditional Use Permits. Conditional use permit decisions have been the source of numerous complaints about the review process, including concerns about design review being conducted by City Council through conditional use permits, failure to consider the recommendations of the lower boards/commissions, and new, costly requirements being unexpectedly placed on projects at the very final stage of the process. Concerns also include the fact that the standards included in the UDO for conditional use permits are very broad and allow for a wide range of discretionary decisions by the City Council.

Time of Review Process. The four levels of review for larger projects can prove time-consuming, which adds to the costs of development projects. The UDO does not provide time limitations for all review decisions, which means that the overall review process can be continued for a long period of time.

Unclear or Dated Standards. Downtown projects are governed by the design and development standards found in the UDO and the Downtown Asheville Design Guidelines. Many of the UDO standards are not formulated specifically for Downtown projects. The Downtown Design Guidelines were written in the 1980's and do not adequately address the scale of new projects being proposed for Downtown Asheville (see Strategies 5 & 6).

No Clear, Rational Process for Obtaining Public Benefits. Currently, large development projects are not required by the UDO to provide public benefits such as affordable/workforce housing or open space in exchange for density bonuses. Developers may voluntarily propose a “benefits package” to mitigate the impacts of their projects, but many citizens would like to see this standardized through a UDO requirement that would be included in the review process (see Strategy 7).

Limits on Staff/Volunteer Time and Expertise. City staff time in support of boards/commissions is limited, as is the time of many board/commission members, who serve on a voluntary basis. In addition, some citizens expressed concern that appointed board/commission members do not have enough design/development expertise or knowledge of specialized Downtown conditions to conduct meaningful review of Downtown projects.

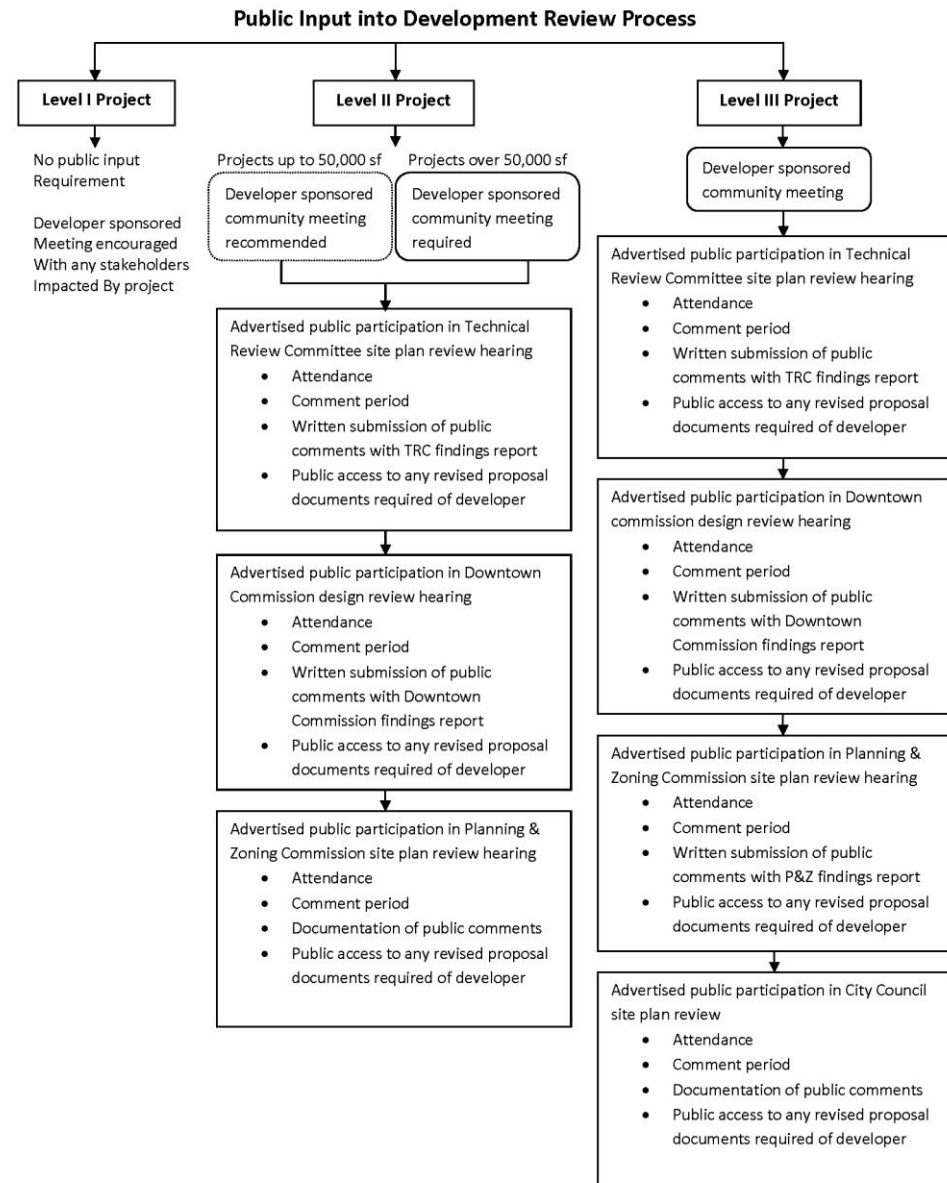


Major Benefits of Revised Review Process

- ***Greater reliance on technical expertise:*** The “lower” boards/commissions (the Technical Review Committee, the Downtown Commission, and the Planning & Zoning Commission) each have specialized knowledge about development review that should be taken into consideration in the review process. City Council’s approval decisions for Level III-Downtown projects will take the findings and recommendations of these boards into consideration with the removal of the conditional use permit process from Level III-Downtown development review.
- ***Review based on clear, rational standards:*** Expanding the UDO to include detailed design and development standards that apply to Downtown Asheville adds greater predictability to the process. Although standards should be flexible enough to allow developers to formulate creative design solutions, they should provide meaningful direction for review decisions (see Strategy 6). Formal findings made by each board/commission should identify how decisions have been reached and how a project complies with these standards.
- ***Additional opportunities for public input:*** Although a public hearing is removed from the Level III review process, it is replaced by the requirement that a developer meet with affected property owners very early in the process. This meeting will provide adequate notice of the project to the public and also will create the opportunity for neighbors and interested parties to provide meaningful input at a stage at which development plans have not been finalized. In addition, adding Planning & Zoning Commission review for Level II projects will allow another opportunity for public input and

board/commission oversight for the majority of proposed projects.

- **Political accountability:** Although some members of the public would like to see politics entirely removed from the process, the governing board (City Council) retains some authority over the largest projects that may have significant community impacts. As ultimate approval authority rests with the City Council, its members may be held politically accountable for their decisions. The Planning & Zoning Commission also offers indirect political accountability, as the majority of members are appointed by the City Council.



Review Processes in Other Jurisdictions

Many of North Carolina's larger cities have review processes for downtown projects that are much simpler than Asheville's. These processes generally include only one or two levels of review for larger projects. No metropolitan jurisdiction requires a conditional use permit (also known as a "special use permit") for size only like Asheville's Level III projects or ties site plan review and conditional use permit decisions together in the same approval process.

<i>Review Processes for Downtown Projects in Other North Carolina Jurisdictions</i>				
City	Design Review	Site Plan Review	Approval Body	Conditional Use Permit Process
<i>Greensboro</i>	None	Technical Review Committee	Technical Review Committee	Separate process through Zoning Commission
<i>Winston-Salem</i>	None	Planning Board	Planning Board	Separate process through Board of Adjustment or City Council
<i>Raleigh</i>	None	City Council, for all projects over 10,000 SF	City Council	Separate process through Board of Adjustment or City Council
<i>Durham</i>	Design District Review Team	Development Review Board	Development Review Board	Separate process through City Council

Variances or Special Exceptions

Asheville's new Downtown design and development standards will contain detailed requirements for proposed downtown projects. These standards should apply to the majority of proposals; however, there may be a rare case in which meeting the standards would be physically impossible or would cause significant hardship to a property owner. In this event, a variance, or special exception from the standards, should be granted by the approval body to alleviate circumstances that are unique to the site.

A variance or special exception should:

- Depart from the design and development standards only to the minimum degree necessary
- Not impair the visual or functional integrity of the site or its surrounding area
- Be allowed only if there is no feasible alternative for compliance

To obtain a variance or special exception, a developer or property owner should be required to submit a site plan and a written explanation detailing why the departure from the standards is necessary. This explanation should include a discussion of how the departure meets the purposes of the Downtown design and development standards better than the existing standards. The variance, or special exception, would be considered during the same public hearings as the site plan review process. Each review board should consider the variance application, with the Technical Review Committee and the Downtown Commission making a written recommendation to the approval body about why the variance should or should not be granted. The approval

body (the Planning & Zoning Commission or the City Council) should consider these recommendations and make written findings detailing why the variance should or should not be granted during site plan review.

If the desired departure from the standards is very limited in nature, it may be desirable to allow for early administrative approval of a variance or special exception. A "limited departure" may be defined as a variation not exceeding a certain percentage (usually 10 or 15 percent) of a particular standard. For example, if a required setback is 10 feet, but the property can only accommodate a nine-foot setback, the applicant could request a limited departure (10%) from the standard. In the case of a limited departure, the Planning Director should review the application and make written findings on why the variance should be granted. This administrative approval would not require a public hearing, and the Planning Director would not have the authority to waive any other design and development requirements. After administrative approval of the variance, the project application would proceed through the site plan review process.

A variance also could be granted for unique cases in which a proposed project offers an innovative design that meets the spirit of the design and development standards, yet does not fully comply with the standards. This would be a rare case, applicable only to a project that offers a highly creative design. As with a typical variance, the departure allowed should only be the minimum necessary, and the design should be compatible with its surroundings. Written findings should discuss the unique nature of the project and detail how the variance will meet the intent of the design and development standards.

Alternative Review Processes

In addition to the recommended review process option discussed in the main body of the text, several alternatives were considered. These include:

Alternative I: Planning & Zoning Commission as the approval body for all Level II and Level III projects.

This alternative would remove City Council from the site plan review process altogether, as the Planning & Zoning Commission would assume approval authority for all downtown projects that do not qualify for administrative approval (Level II and Level III projects). Under this alternative, projects could be divided into Downtown Minor Projects and Downtown Major Projects, with Downtown Minor Projects being equivalent to a current Level I project and requiring only staff review and approval.

A Downtown Major Project would undergo three levels of review beyond staff review: 1) review by the Technical Review Committee; 2) review by the Downtown Commission; and 3) review by the Planning & Zoning Commission. The Technical Review Committee would evaluate the technical merits of a site plan proposal, and the Downtown Commission would conduct design review using the new design and development standards for downtown projects written into the Unified Development Ordinance and updated downtown design guidelines. Both the Technical Review Committee and the Downtown Commission would be required to make written findings and a written recommendation that would be presented to the Planning & Zoning Commission for its project review. The Planning & Zoning Commission would evaluate the project against the UDO standards, taking into consideration the findings and recommendations of the Technical Review Committee and the

Downtown Commission. The Planning & Zoning Commission would make written findings and issue an approval, approval with conditions, or denial. An appeal of the Planning & Zoning Commission's decision could be made to City Council.

No conditional use permit would be required for site plan review of a Downtown Major Project based solely on the project's size. If a conditional use permit was required due to a proposed use, this would be a separate process that would go through City Council prior to the Planning & Zoning Commission's review. Site plan approval could not be obtained without the proposed project successfully securing a conditional use permit.

- **Strengths:** Elimination of one level of review for Level III projects; expansion of the role of the Planning & Zoning Commission; requirement that each commission prepare written findings and that these findings be considered by the approval body; elimination of the conditional use permit requirement for Level III projects.
- **Weaknesses:** City Council is removed from the review process and has no say in large projects that could have major impacts on downtown; little political accountability in the review process.

Alternative II: Technical Review Committee as the approval body for all Level II and Level III projects.

This alternative reduces the downtown project review process to a minimum: design review by the Downtown Commission and site plan review by the Technical Review Committee for all projects that do not qualify for administrative approval. As with Alternative I, projects could be divided into two categories:

Downtown Minor Projects (administrative approval only) and Downtown Major Projects. All Downtown Major Projects would be required to undergo design review by the Downtown Commission as an initial step. The Downtown Commission would review the proposed project against the updated downtown design guidelines and new downtown design and development standards and prepare a set of written findings and a recommendation that would be forwarded to the Technical Review Committee. The Technical Review Committee would then evaluate the site plan against the development standards contained in the UDO and consider the Downtown Commission's recommendation. If a project is found to meet the UDO standards, the Technical Review Committee would prepare a set of written findings and issue an approval or approval with conditions. If the project does not meet the standards, the Technical Review Committee would deny the project. An appeal of the Technical Review Committee's decision could be made to the Planning & Zoning Commission.

As in Alternative I, no project would be required to obtain a conditional use permit solely on the basis of its size. If a proposed use triggered a conditional use permit process, this would be a separate process that would go before City Council. Site plan approval by the Technical Review Committee could not be obtained prior to the City Council's approval of a conditional use permit.

- **Strengths:** Review confined to bodies that have specialized knowledge about design and technical aspects; elimination of two levels of review for Level III projects; elimination of the conditional use permit requirement for Level III projects.

- **Weaknesses:** City Council is removed from the review process and has no say in large projects that could have major impacts on downtown; the Planning & Zoning Commission, a board with specialized knowledge, has no say in downtown projects; Technical Review Committee is composed primarily of staff; little political accountability.

Alternative III: Planning & Zoning Commission as the approval body for all Level II projects and City Council as the approval body for all Level III projects, with three levels of review only.

Alternative III is similar to the recommended review option, with one exception: Level III projects would not go before the Planning & Zoning Commission for review. The existing Level III threshold would be adjusted upward to ensure that Level III projects included only the largest downtown proposals. Thus, most projects would fall into the Level II category and go before the Technical Review Committee, the Downtown Commission, and the Planning & Zoning Commission for review. As in the recommended option, City Council would review only a small number of projects that have the potential for major impacts on the downtown district.

A proposed Level I project would be required to undergo administrative review only, but a Level II project would undergo review by the Technical Review Committee and the Downtown Commission, with each body preparing a written set of findings and a recommendation that would be forwarded to the Planning & Zoning Commission. The Planning & Zoning Commission would be required to take these recommendations into consideration during its project review. After evaluating how a

project meets the downtown design and development standards in the UDO, the Planning & Zoning Commission would issue a set of written findings and an approval, approval with conditions, or denial of the project. An appeal of the Planning & Zoning Commission's decision could be made to City Council.

A Level III project also would undergo review by the Technical Review Committee and the Downtown Commission. As with Level II projects, each commission would prepare a set of written findings and a recommendation, but these would be forwarded directly to City Council. The Planning & Zoning Commission would have no authority to review Level III projects. The City Council would conduct site plan review, taking into consideration the findings and recommendations of the lower commissions and evaluating the project using the standards found in the UDO. The City Council would then prepare a set of written findings and approve, approve with conditions, or deny the project. An appeal of the City Council's decision could be made to the Superior Court of Buncombe County.

As with the other alternatives and the recommended option, the conditional use permit process would be divorced from site plan review. No conditional use permit would be required for a downtown project solely due to size; a conditional use permit could, however, be required for a particular use (which would be outlined in the UDO). If a conditional use permit was required for a Level II or Level III project, this would be a separate process that would go before City Council prior to site plan review. No site plan approval for a project requiring a conditional use permit could be obtained from the Planning & Zoning Commission or the City Council without first securing the conditional use permit.

- **Strengths:** Elimination of one level of review for Level III projects; elimination of the conditional use permit requirement for Level III projects; increased role of the Planning & Zoning Commission, which has specialized knowledge; political accountability of City Council; requirement that approval body consider written findings of lower commissions.
- **Weaknesses:** Planning & Zoning Commission does not evaluate Level III projects; little political accountability for the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Alternative IV: Downtown Commission as the approval body for all Level II and Level III (downtown) projects.

North Carolina law permits a governing body to delegate its power to a wide range of boards and commissions. Asheville's current ordinances empower the Downtown Commission to conduct design review of downtown projects, but it does not have the authority to conduct site plan review and approve downtown projects. However, the Downtown Commission is a specialized body that has unique knowledge of the downtown area, and it can be argued that this knowledge makes it the best body to review downtown project proposals.

The City Council could amend the UDO to allow the Downtown Commission to perform site plan review. The downtown development review process would be reduced to two steps: review by the Technical Review Committee and review by the Downtown Commission. The Downtown Commission would evaluate a project's design and its site plan against the design and development standards found in the UDO. Although the Downtown Commission could make recommendations about a

project's design, its primary task would be to determine whether or not a proposal meets the UDO standards. The Downtown Commission would take into consideration written findings and the recommendation of the Technical Review Committee and prepare a set of written findings that detail how well a proposed project meets the UDO standards. The Downtown Commission would then issue an approval, approval with conditions, or denial. An appeal of a Downtown Commission decision could be made to the City Council.

Although this alternative gives the Downtown Commission greater power in the downtown project review process, it still does not make compliance with design review mandatory. The Downtown Commission's evaluation and approval of the project would be based solely on the design and development standards found in the UDO. If a project meets these standards, it would have to be approved, although the Downtown Commission, as part of its design review function, could make specific recommendations about design that would be at the discretion of the applicant to follow.

As with all other alternatives, no project would be required to obtain a conditional use permit based solely on its size. If a conditional use permit is required due to a proposed use, this would be done through a separate process that would go before City Council. No site plan approval from the Downtown Commission could be obtained without first securing a conditional use permit.

- **Strengths:** Increased role of the Downtown Commission, which has specialized knowledge; elimination of two levels of review for Level III projects; elimination of the conditional use permit requirement for Level III projects.
- **Weaknesses:** City Council and the Planning & Zoning Commission have no say in large projects that could have major impacts on the downtown; little political accountability for decisions.

Summary of Potential Alternatives

Alternative	Level II Project Review	Level III Project Review	Conditional Use Permit?
Alternative I	1) Technical Review Committee 2) Downtown Commission 3) Planning & Zoning Commission (approval body)	1) Technical Review Committee 2) Downtown Commission 3) Planning & Zoning Commission (approval body)	If required for a use, separate process before the City Council
Alternative II	1) Downtown Commission 2) Technical Review Committee (approval body)	1) Downtown Commission 2) Technical Review Committee (approval body)	If required for a use, separate process before the City Council
Alternative III	1) Technical Review Committee 2) Downtown Commission 3) Planning & Zoning Commission (approval body)	1) Technical Review Committee 2) Downtown Commission 3) City Council (approval body)	If required for a use, separate process before the City Council
Alternative IV	1) Technical Review Committee 2) Downtown Commission (approval body)	1) Technical Review Committee 2) Downtown Commission (approval body)	If required for a use, separate process before the City Council

appendix

Managing Downtown

7

Nurture a sustainable and resilient economy through active management of Downtown.

CONTENTS

- Detailed recommendations supplementing core strategy elements (Number references correspond to superscript numbers in main strategy text.)
- Community Benefits Program sample revenue scenarios
- Downtown Management Entity (Community Improvement District): recommendations on how to establish a successful Downtown management entity, plus precedents and other resources for further advice.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS SUPPLEMENTING CORE STRATEGY ELEMENTS

(Number references correspond to superscript numbers in main strategy text.)

³⁵ Downtown Asheville stakeholders should determine the most fair and effective means of generating CBP funds. The DMP consulting team recommends for consideration the following blended combination of three sources, which have enjoyed widespread acceptance and effectiveness across the United States. Each of the sources ultimately tap development value supported in part by the CBP, but impact current and future Downtown stakeholders differently.

- 1) An annual fee from all Downtown properties based on assessed value (may be a dedicated portion of existing property tax revenues). This ultimately places cost burden on current residents and businesses.
- 2) A percentage fee on permitted construction value of Level II and III Downtown construction projects. This ultimately places cost burden on future residents and businesses. Project sponsors may opt out of this requirement by undergoing design review by City Council, or by providing in-kind contributions of equivalent value, such as affordable housing units, streetscape improvements or below-market retail rents. In-kind CBP contributions need not occur on the project site, but should be within one mile of the site; make this distance subject to periodic

revision by the CID. Also consider rewarding achievement of sustainable building standards (i.e. LEED Gold) with credit toward the CBP contribution. Establish a payment schedule of three equal installments:

- The first payment accompanies the project sponsor's submission of a plan to mitigate adverse construction impacts.
 - The second occurs on receiving a final certificate of occupancy.
 - The third occurs one year following issuance of a final certificate of occupancy or upon the sale of the final share of interest in the project, whichever comes first.
- 3) A property title transfer tax based on a portion of sales price. This may be assessed on the buyer, seller, or combination of both. The tax has the benefit of reducing rapid "flips" of property ownership. Special state legislative approval is required for applying a transfer tax.

³⁶ Award portions of 75-percent and 25-percent are recommended.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS PROGRAM – SAMPLE REVENUE SCENARIOS

The Community Benefits Program (CBP) offers a groundbreaking opportunity to provide funding for an array of Downtown needs from affordable housing to cleaner streets, identified by a broad range of community members from Downtown business and property owners to artists and residents. The funding could be secured by tapping a small portion of the Downtown development value that would benefit from the investments of the CBP, and that has to some degree contributed to these needs through the pressures of new development. This appendix illustrates potential revenues based on several different contribution scenarios.

Principles

The CBP should follow these principles:

- Deliver a predictable and reliable funding stream
- Transcend political cycles
- Serve a distinct purpose
- Pass muster in court
- Model proportionality in both funding capture and benefits allocation
- Avoid burdensome fee calculation/collection processes
- Function in both good times and bad
- Account for inflation, appreciation, depreciation and the time value of money

Recommended revenue sources

We recommend combining the following three tactics to address the varied purposes set forth under the community benefit package payment umbrella. The party ultimately bearing the burden of each revenue source is noted.

1. An annual per-parcel fee on all existing and new taxable property Downtown, based on the entire building's assessed value, which will reflect the extent to which a property benefits from "clean, safe and green" style programs. This approach ultimately places the burden on each building's current occupants regardless of whether they rent or own. Alternatively, the City (and perhaps the County) could choose to devote a share of the property tax revenues collected from Downtown Asheville parcels. Note: Additional payments-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT) may be considered for non-taxable properties, though they are not assumed in the scenarios below due to their minor overall contribution.
2. A percentage fee, based on building permit stamps, assessed on all new development Downtown regardless of height, variance status or location relative to the national historic district boundaries, which links the contribution to perceived impact on Downtown character. This approach ultimately places the burden on each building's future occupants (Downtown's net new population of residents or businesses), again regardless of whether they rent or own.

3. A title transfer fee based on a share of sales price, which links the contribution to the desirability of a Downtown location or investment. Improvements to buildings that then contribute to sales price are, in this logic, presumed to have been made because they would achieve return on investment. This approach enables past and future occupants to negotiate how the fee will be paid, which will in turn reflect market realities. Note: Although it might make sense to only apply the fee to gains made after correcting for inflation, complicating the program increases administrative costs and creates an incentive for shielding true sales prices from the record. Other types of exceptions, e.g., title transfers occasioned by an inheritance or divorce, can be addressed by making transactions involving minimal payments (e.g., the traditional token dollar) exempt. Exceptions for first-time homebuyers or other transactions may also be considered.

Revenue goals and potential

For purposes of these scenarios, an aggregate target funding amount of at least \$15 million over 10 years has been used. If half of these revenues were allocated to affordable housing, they could help make 10% of overall Downtown housing unit production affordable (assuming \$75,000 subsidy needed per affordable unit, and development of 100 new units/year on average). Annual revenues would vary depending on market conditions and

development activity, but an average annual revenue of \$1.5 million would be needed. Revenues would increase gradually each year with ongoing development. With a reliable funding stream established, bonds could be sold to provide more funds up front for affordable housing development or other needs, and paid back over time from ongoing revenues (on the model of project development financing (PDF), North Carolina's term for what is also known as tax-increment financing (TIF)).

The following four pages show how these funds could be raised through various combinations of the three revenue sources recommended above. Results are summarized on the fourth page. "Total Potential Community Benefit Contributions" shows the revenue from an even 1% share of the value of all three sources (grey shaded lines from the preceding pages) – this is provided not so much as a suggested funding scenario itself as an example of how the figures and assumptions of the first three pages produce the result on the fourth page. Then, under the heading "Potential Combinations to Achieve Desired Yield," two scenarios shown a hypothetical year 1 of the program, raising about \$1.5 million and \$2 million. Ultimately, the funding target level and contribution amount from each source should be determined through further discussion by Asheville's Downtown community. Note that for each funding source, variables are included to illustrate the implications of higher and lower levels of development, of property value, of percentage contribution rate from each source, and related factors.

Potential Community Benefit Contribution Derived from New Construction

Assumptions: Annual New Construction

	Residential Uses (all types)				Commercial Uses (all types)		
	Low	Moderate	High		Low	Moderate	High
Annual Units	75	100	125				
Average SF/ Unit	1,200	1,250	1,300	Average SF/Year	25,000	50,000	75,000
\$/SF (\$2009)	\$ 200	\$ 250	\$ 300	\$/SF (\$2009)	\$ 250	\$ 300	\$ 350
Annual Value	\$ 18,000,000	\$ 31,250,000	\$ 48,750,000	Annual Value	\$ 6,250,000	\$ 15,000,000	\$ 26,250,000
City Taxes	\$ 75,600	\$ 131,250	\$ 204,750	City Taxes	\$ 26,250	\$ 63,000	\$ 110,250
County Taxes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	County Taxes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Calculations: Fees from New Construction at Alternate Rates

New Residential Construction

Fee (Percent of Construction)	Development Activity		
	Low	Moderate	High
0.25%	\$ 45,000	\$ 78,125	\$ 121,875
0.50%	\$ 90,000	\$ 156,250	\$ 243,750
0.75%	\$ 135,000	\$ 234,375	\$ 365,625
1.00%	\$ 180,000	\$ 312,500	\$ 487,500
1.25%	\$ 225,000	\$ 390,625	\$ 609,375
1.50%	\$ 270,000	\$ 468,750	\$ 731,250
1.75%	\$ 315,000	\$ 546,875	\$ 853,125
2.00%	\$ 360,000	\$ 625,000	\$ 975,000

New Commercial Construction

Fee (Percent of Construction)	Development Activity		
	Low	Moderate	High
0.25%	\$ 15,625	\$ 37,500	\$ 65,625
0.50%	\$ 31,250	\$ 75,000	\$ 131,250
0.75%	\$ 46,875	\$ 112,500	\$ 196,875
1.00%	\$ 62,500	\$ 150,000	\$ 262,500
1.25%	\$ 78,125	\$ 187,500	\$ 328,125
1.50%	\$ 93,750	\$ 225,000	\$ 393,750
1.75%	\$ 109,375	\$ 262,500	\$ 459,375
2.00%	\$ 125,000	\$ 300,000	\$ 525,000

Potential Community Benefit Contribution Derived from Existing Real Estate

Assumptions: Total Downtown Value by Year, Annual Turnover

Current Total Assessed Value in CBD (Exempt):	\$	366,726,100
Current Total Assessed Value in CBD (Taxable):		<u>475,693,747</u>
Current Total Assessed Value in CBD:	\$	842,419,847
New Value Added - Low:	\$	24,250,000
New Value Added - Moderate:	\$	46,250,000
New Value Added - High:	\$	75,000,000
Annual Turnover:		10%
Annual City Property Tax Rate:		0.0042

Expected Total Assessed Value by Year:	Annual New Development Total		
	Low	Moderate	High
1	\$ 499,943,747	\$ 521,943,747	\$ 550,693,747
2	\$ 524,193,747	\$ 568,193,747	\$ 625,693,747
3	\$ 548,443,747	\$ 614,443,747	\$ 700,693,747
4	\$ 572,693,747	\$ 660,693,747	\$ 775,693,747
5	\$ 596,943,747	\$ 706,943,747	\$ 850,693,747
6	\$ 621,193,747	\$ 753,193,747	\$ 925,693,747
7	\$ 645,443,747	\$ 799,443,747	\$ 1,000,693,747
8	\$ 669,693,747	\$ 845,693,747	\$ 1,075,693,747
9	\$ 693,943,747	\$ 891,943,747	\$ 1,150,693,747
10	\$ 718,193,747	\$ 938,193,747	\$ 1,225,693,747

Calculations: Potential Revenues from a Real Estate Transfer Tax

Fee (Percent of Value)	Year 1		
	Low	Moderate	High
0.50%	\$ 249,972	\$ 260,972	\$ 275,347
0.75%	\$ 374,958	\$ 391,458	\$ 413,020
1.00%	\$ 499,944	\$ 521,944	\$ 550,694
1.25%	\$ 624,930	\$ 652,430	\$ 688,367
1.50%	\$ 749,916	\$ 782,916	\$ 826,041
1.75%	\$ 874,902	\$ 913,402	\$ 963,714
2.00%	\$ 999,887	\$ 1,043,887	\$ 1,101,387

Fee (Percent of Value)	Year 10		
	Low	Moderate	High
0.50%	\$ 359,097	\$ 469,097	\$ 612,847
0.75%	\$ 538,645	\$ 703,645	\$ 919,270
1.00%	\$ 718,194	\$ 938,194	\$ 1,225,694
1.25%	\$ 897,742	\$ 1,172,742	\$ 1,532,117
1.50%	\$ 1,077,291	\$ 1,407,291	\$ 1,838,541
1.75%	\$ 1,256,839	\$ 1,641,839	\$ 2,144,964
2.00%	\$ 1,436,387	\$ 1,876,387	\$ 2,451,387

Potential Community Benefit Contribution Derived from Existing Real Estate (continued)

Calculations: Potential Revenues from a Share of City Property Taxes

Share (Percent of Property Taxes)	Year 1			Share (Percent of Property Taxes)	Year 10		
	Low	Moderate	High		Low	Moderate	High
1.25%	\$ 26,247	\$ 27,402	\$ 28,911	1.25%	\$ 37,705	\$ 49,255	\$ 64,349
1.50%	\$ 31,496	\$ 32,882	\$ 34,694	1.50%	\$ 45,246	\$ 59,106	\$ 77,219
1.75%	\$ 36,746	\$ 38,363	\$ 40,476	1.75%	\$ 52,787	\$ 68,957	\$ 90,088
2.00%	\$ 41,995	\$ 43,843	\$ 46,258	2.00%	\$ 60,328	\$ 78,808	\$ 102,958
2.25%	\$ 47,245	\$ 49,324	\$ 52,041	2.25%	\$ 67,869	\$ 88,659	\$ 115,828
2.50%	\$ 52,494	\$ 54,804	\$ 57,823	2.50%	\$ 75,410	\$ 98,510	\$ 128,698

Calculations: Potential Revenues from PILOTs by Exempt Properties

Annual Property Tax Revenues if Taxable:		\$ 1,540,250	Potential Successful Pilot Agreements		
			20% Low	35% Moderate	50% High
Yield if Full Share:	0.25%	\$ 3,850.62	\$ 770	\$ 1,348	\$ 1,925
	0.50%	\$ 7,701.25	\$ 1,540	\$ 2,695	\$ 3,851
	0.75%	\$ 11,551.87	\$ 2,310	\$ 4,043	\$ 5,776
	1.00%	\$ 15,402.50	\$ 3,080	\$ 5,391	\$ 7,701
	1.25%	\$ 19,253.12	\$ 3,851	\$ 6,739	\$ 9,627
	1.50%	\$ 23,103.74	\$ 4,621	\$ 8,086	\$ 11,552

Total Potential Community Benefit Contributions (grey shaded lines)

Volume and Value Scenarios				
	Low		Moderate	High
Year 1:	\$ 787,520	\$	1,033,678	\$ 1,354,653
Year 10:	\$ 1,024,103	\$	1,484,893	\$ 2,086,353

Potential Combinations to Achieve Desired Yields

Hypothetical Year 1 Path to \$1.5 million			
	Rate	Yield	Share
New Residential Construction:	2.00%	\$ 625,000	31.05%
New Commercial Construction:	2.00%	300,000	14.91%
Real Estate Transfer Tax:	1.00%	521,944	25.93%
City Property Taxes:	2.00%	43,843	2.18%
		\$ 1,490,787	100.00%

Hypothetical Year 1 Path to \$2 million			
	Rate	Yield	Share
New Residential Construction:	2.00%	\$ 625,000	31.05%
New Commercial Construction:	2.00%	300,000	14.91%
Real Estate Transfer Tax:	2.00%	1,043,887	51.86%
City Property Taxes:	2.00%	43,843	2.18%
		\$ 2,012,731	100.00%

Source: City of Asheville Economic Development Department and Economic Stewardship, Inc.

January 12, 2009

To: Asheville Downtown Master Plan
Advisory Committee

Subject: DRAFT detailed recommendations
on establishing a downtown management
entity for Asheville

The Asheville Downtown Management Entity

The ambitious but achievable program
spelled out in Strategy 7 of the Draft
Downtown Master Plan calls for coordinated
action in a number of areas, including:

- Physical improvements: parking, streetscaping, building renovations, public art
- Keeping downtown clean, green and safe
- Leveraging major private investments for community benefit

- Giving priority to key parcels that link into the strategy
- Setting and maintaining quality standards throughout
- Marketing vacant space to desired tenants, recruiting new complementary businesses
- Strengthening the competitiveness of existing businesses
- Developing and maintaining a downtown database, market information
- Coordination, communications, promotion of downtown as a whole
- Coordinating, even producing, a regular calendar of special events and activities

Many opportunities lie in store for downtown Asheville. Taking advantage of them hinges on the ability of the community to orchestrate public and private action on all of these fronts over time and as conditions change. This takes conscious,

committed, responsive management – and a management entity to do it.

The challenging current global economic climate, and its local impacts, raise immediate questions around how a downtown management entity can be funded while budgets of the City, County, business and property owners, and tenants are all under pressure. Indeed, funding may be a challenge even in stronger economic times; the “How to Pay For It” section below outlines some options. However, the inherent cost of operating the entity should not be dismissed as a prohibitive immediate burden, for several reasons. First, the two-year timeframe realistically required to establish a management entity provides time for economic trends to stabilize and budgets to anticipate future costs. Second, the ability of a management entity to start small and grow – and shrink -- incrementally over time as desire and resources allow, means that entity scope and budget are inherently flexible and scalable. Third, operations costs can draw to some extent upon existing outlays for services that could be handled more efficiently through the entity. Fourth, and most importantly, there is an inherent business case to be made for dedicating resources to a management entity, as its primary objective is to build private and civic value in downtown. Thus funding questions should revolve around equity and timing of

burden/benefit among downtown stakeholders, rather than seeing the entity as merely an added cost.

Managing Downtown: Everyone Benefits, or “What’s in it for me?”

Earlier efforts to manage or promote downtown have met with varying degrees of success for varying periods of time. There is widespread agreement that downtown’s current rebirth can be attributed to a period of intense professional management by the city between the mid-1980’s and mid-1990’s. However, when political cycles shifted, this ended and downtown was pretty much left to voluntary efforts to coordinate the whole. Such efforts are often fragmented and plagued by strapped budgets. There has been a lack of agreement on who should bear the lion’s share of the financial responsibilities. This is a major reason for the attention that has been given to involving all the major stakeholders in the planning process, for the success of the downtown plan lies in the degree to which “ownership” of downtown is shared broadly rather than relegated to one single group or constituency.

There are substantial benefits for just about everyone if downtown is actively managed. Here are some of them:

Property owners: Enhanced property values, improved upkeep.

Retailers: Better overall environment and more potential customers thanks to increased activities and reasons for people to be downtown. More coordinated promotion of downtown's offerings.

Developers/investors: Greater value to location thanks to stability and climate created by active management and constructive involvement of community in downtown's future. Less danger of being target of public criticism.

Major employers, including County: Enhanced property values, significantly increased economic activity, greater overall economic health and improved surroundings for employees.

Consumers and users: More choices, better environment, more amenities, improved convenience and safety, more fun.

Downtown residents: Better ways of managing/ mediating the inevitable conflicts inherent in a lively downtown.

Taxpayers and elected officials: Value of city's most important tax base is significantly enhanced, reducing dependence on residential property taxes. City's civic pride and image are improved.

Nearby neighborhoods and regional residents: A thriving downtown can be the central focus of a smart growth management strategy, concentrating development and ultimately conserving energy and open space. It will be a source of pride and activity, a place to show off to visitors.

For these reasons – and because the goal of a managed, active, diverse and vital downtown enjoys strong community support, the time has come to create the management entity to do it.

Existing Organizations

Organizations that have downtown as part of their agenda are manifold; a partial list includes City Council, the Office of Economic Development, Asheville-Buncombe Chamber of Commerce, HUB Alliance, Asheville Design Center and DARN. Each has a role to play and some have been actively involved in specific downtown activities. But none of these organizations has as its primary mission the active long-term management of a diverse, healthy downtown. No one advocates duplication of effort or the proliferation of new organizations, but nearly every successful downtown revitalization effort in

the country has involved the genesis of a specific downtown organization.

A New Entity is Needed

Asheville needs to join the ranks of healthy downtowns in North Carolina and around the country that have strong, professionally staffed downtown management entities. The leadership seeds for it may well be within the Advisory Committee that has guided the plan.

Roles and Relationships, or “How can I help?”

No one group can do it all. There are roles and contributions to be made by many. Following is a brief synopsis of the needs and ways in which many segments of the community can and should participate.

Downtown Property Owners. Lending active leadership and financial support for downtown management, supporting the goals of using most of downtown’s ground level space for locally owned retail and restaurants, cooperating with recruitment efforts to attract needed new businesses downtown. Maintaining and improving their buildings in coordination with the goals of the downtown plan.

Retail Businesses. Providing top-flight, friendly customer service and responsiveness to consumer needs. Actively participating in the downtown entity and providing financial support to it. Giving increased attention to the quality of presentation in signage, window display, rears of stores, etc.,--- everything that contributes to the image of downtown’s retail and community environment. Supporting efforts to promote downtown as a whole as well as individual businesses.

Cultural Organizations. Key players in the diversification of downtown’s attractions through their support of and participation in special events, community celebrations and other public activities that benefit from music, artists, performance and other forms of creativity and fun. The planned Pack Square Cultural District will help efforts, fostering increased visibility, collaboration and leadership from established institutions like the Asheville Art Museum and Asheville Community Theater, smaller arts-related businesses and performance venues, and the proposed Performing Arts Center. Socially-focused organizations like the Young Mens’ Institute can also increase downtown’s role as a gathering place for the whole Asheville community

Chamber of Commerce. Continue to support downtown's rebirth. Keep and expand efforts to enhance the region's competitiveness for tourism and business location.

Asheville Mayor and City Council.

Continue priority support of downtown's vitality in all program areas effecting downtown, including public space maintenance, parking enforcement, security, municipal upkeep and signage, public landscaping improvements, rehabilitation of housing in nearby downtown neighborhoods, and streamline the development review process when it supports the goals of the downtown strategy.

Individuals. Continue loyalty to independent downtown businesses. Be a "friend of downtown," actively shop, dine, play, attend events in downtown Asheville.

The work of the downtown management entity is to wake up every day committed to making the complex machine of downtown work smoothly, behind the scenes as well as on the front stage. Its activities start with assuring that downtown is clean, green and safe. This means monitoring the quality of city services – police, code enforcement, sanitation and trash pickup, and enhancing the current baseline service level by augmenting trash and graffiti removal, heightening security presence and working

towards resolution of aggressive pan handling. In addition to clean, green and safe, the management entity's efforts fall into the familiar four categories promulgated for more than two decades by the National Main Street program:

Organization

- Assuring the collective management of the downtown
- Coordinating with Asheville's many organizations, businesses, schools and cultural groups whose participation in downtown events is vital
- Helping generate financial resources for important downtown activities

Promotion

- Constantly communicating the vision, the strategy and the progress of downtown to all who are important to its success
- Undertaking a regular calendar of special events and promotional activities designed to attract people to the downtown and to reinforce its image as THE vital exciting and fun place to be.
- Advertising and promoting downtown and downtown businesses to the region and beyond

Design

- Advocating design quality in rehabilitation, new development,

landscape, parking facilities and other public amenities

Economic Restructuring

- Marketing downtown to prospective investors and tenants, especially retailers whose offerings can add to an appropriate retail mix
- Creating, managing, updating the downtown database and drawing from it to monitor downtown's business climate, and to recruit appropriate new businesses
- Providing support to strengthen downtown's existing businesses.

More than two decades of experience in literally hundreds of cities in the US and Canada with downtown management provides virtual unanimous confirmation of the value of a professionally staffed entity engaged in implementing a balanced program. To assure a strong start, Asheville's initial game plan needs to stress linkages: immediate actions that will lead to larger strategic gains while producing results, progress and excitement. All actions and separate projects need to be seen – and communicated – as part of the overall strategy.

Governance, Membership, Professional Staff

It is relatively easy to file papers of incorporation as a not-for-profit organization, produce bylaws and go into business. It is a bit more complicated to decide on what the business is and how it should be run. And, Asheville has an exceptionally energetic level of participation in such matters. As guidance, the governing board should be composed of 15-20 people representing a cross-section of constituencies. If the entity is to be a membership organization, membership should be open to any and all who have an interest in downtown and would like to become involved. Through active worker committees many should have the opportunity to participate actively. Indeed, the success of the downtown entity will hinge on *effectively* maximizing involvement.

Optimally, the downtown entity needs an experienced downtown professional as executive director. This individual should be energetic, entrepreneurial, imaginative and skilled at working well with a wide variety of people and personalities. Comparable downtown organizations have staffs of 7-12 people. In addition to the executive director, Asheville would benefit from an associate to manage a high capacity clean, safe and green program, which might itself have 4-6

“community service representatives,” individuals in special blazers who are a visible and active presence downtown, keeping sidewalks clean, assisting visitors, discouraging inappropriate behavior by street people, etc. Optimally, the downtown entity also needs a staffer for marketing and business retention / recruitment. Many downtown organizations have a fund for marketing downtown; Asheville should, too. And, the downtown entity’s office needs a visible presence and sufficient room to hold meetings.

A back of the envelope estimate is that the downtown management entity at start up and expanded levels could run in the neighborhood of \$230,000 – 600,000 annually.

How to Pay for It

It has been said that the City Council leans towards having the responsibility for downtown management rest with the city, presumably as a part of the city’s economic development office. The required startup funding level presumes that it begins this way. If this is to happen, the majority of the budget for it is presumably to come from the city, as it did in the mid-1980s through mid-1990s. Other sources could be contracts for services (some organizations manage downtown parking or provide

additional security, for instance), grants from foundations, and membership dues. Grants are unlikely to come to a city government agency and there are many hurdles to having a membership approach while downtown management rests with the city. In fact, most communities that have relied on membership dues for their core revenues have been plagued by gear grinding over fairness, due to the inevitable free riders who benefit from the services but who dodge paying their share.

Moreover, as election cycles and political climates shift, so do city priorities. It is politically difficult for elected officials to focus special attention and funding on the downtown on a long-term basis. Cities that want to assure a steady predictable source of income from all who benefit from downtown’s vitality create special assessment districts to fund downtown management programs. In Asheville, such a district would have defined boundaries within which all qualifying property owners, in addition to regular taxes, would be assessed a modest amount that would be dedicated exclusively to support improvements and services over and above those provided by the city. Termed a Community Improvement District (CID) in North Carolina, Asheville needs such a vehicle to fund the robust downtown management capacity to implement the plan.

Creating the CID often takes several years of preparation. Because it requires a special assessment on downtown property, there is always public scrutiny and a need to explore together various approaches to structuring the assessment mechanism, to governing the use of the funds generated, and to build the community understanding and support for creating the district. Actual creation of a district will be via ordinance and City Council action.

It is recommended that the Advisory Committee and other interested parties create an informal “pursuit group” charged with identifying and addressing effectively all concerns and questions central to getting the management entity up and running. In

the short term, the pursuit group needs to focus on persuading City Council to devote the necessary funds to the start up operation that will permit it to begin modestly while track is laid for creating the more ambitious CID.

The pursuit group can look to the International Downtown Association for models and case examples from many comparable downtowns (see also “Precedents,” below). It may be desirable for the pursuit group to engage as a facilitator / consultant an expert in the formation of CIDs. Momentum is a fragile, often overlooked factor. The pursuit group needs to pursue diligently and expeditiously, aiming for having the CID up and running within two years.

Sample activity and budget profiles

Two sample versions of a downtown management entity are presented as scenarios for consideration. “Startup” addresses priority issues with a modest level of staff and budget, and “Expanded” offers a larger scope of services that may be added incrementally over time.

1. Activities covered

“S” = Startup version; “E” = Expanded version

Clean, Safe & Green

Enhanced security	S, E
Graffiti, sidewalks, enhanced trash	S, E
Homelessness services	E

Business Retention / Recruitment

Mediating conflicts -- businesses, residents	S, E
Achieving complementary mix of retail	E
Proactive business recruitment	E
Keeping the data base, doing market research	E

Promotion / Marketing / PR

Manage downtown's image.	S, E
Promote downtown as a whole	S, E
Effectively manage major downtown events	E
Broker joint promotions, advertising	S, E

2. Sample budgets

Startup

Downtown coordinator w 2-3 yrs experience	\$35,000
Contracted additional safety, clean services	100,000
Office /supplies / etc	10,000
Marketing fund	50,000
Professional development: board, coordinator	5,000
Website design, operations	10,000
Professional services: legal, admin	20,000

TOTAL -- Staff of 1	\$230,000
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Expanded

Director w 7+ yrs experience	\$120,000
Staff Associate - clean, safe program	50,000
4 CSR staff @ \$30K incl benefits	120,000
Staff Associate - mktg, business recruitment	50,000
Admin Asst	40,000
Marketing fund	200,000
Training / professional development	10,000
Office rent	12,000
Supplies, materials	4,000
Equipment	8,000
Legal / accounting services	15,000

Staff of 8, including 4 community service reps. (CSR)	\$602,000
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All personnel costs are inclusive of benefits.

Precedents

Downtown management entities in Chapel Hill ,Charlotte, Durham, Greensboro, Raleigh, and Wilmington, NC offer valuable in-state precedents.

Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership
www.downtownchapelhill.com

Charlotte Center City Partners
www.charlottecentercity.org

Downtown Durham Inc.
www.downtowndurham.com

Downtown Greensboro Inc.
www.downtowngreensboro.net

Downtown Raleigh Alliance
www.godowntownraleigh.com

Wilmington Downtown, Inc.
www.wilmingtondowntown.com

Other advisory resources

International Downtown Association
www.ida-downtown.org

The *North Carolina Downtown Development Association* offers technical assistance and networking opportunities supporting downtown management issues.
www.ncdda.org

